EDUCATION.



A TALE FOR 1817.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

EDUCATION;

OR,

ELIZABETH, HER LOVER AND HUSBAND.

A Tale for 1817.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

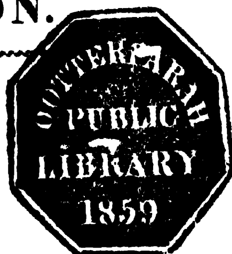
By ELIZA TAYLOR.

> Our restless passions, like tempests on the main,
> Drive Reason from the guidance of our lives,
> And leave us shipwreck'd on a barb'rous coast. SOUTHERN.

VOL. II.

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EDUCATION.



CHAPTER I.

——————— For want of faith,
Down the steep precipice of wrong he slides.

Night Thoughts.

. . . .

——— ——— Rule thy fiery passions,
To bind their rage, and stay their headlong course—
To bear with accidents, and every change
Of various life—to struggle with adversity.

Fair Penitent.

The Countryman in London—Love and Madness.

ON the following morning, Elizabeth, solitary and unsettled, was wandering through the garden, musing on the events of the preceding day, when she was met by Robin Rudd, a young man who had

 occasionally

occasionally acted as a sort of under-gardener at the parsonage, being perfectly respectable and respectful, and veiling under a rusticity of manner a fund of blunt humour. He had been a good deal noticed by both families; but Elizabeth was surprised by his appearance now, as he had, only a few days before, taken a letter from her to Matilda Darnley, having determined on seeking his fortune in London.

"Why, Mr. Rudd," she cried, "I did not expect to see you here, as I supposed you were now in town, where I thought you had determined on settling."

"And so I did, ma'am; but somehow I don't think my fortin lies in Lunnon."

"You have surely not been there long enough to find it. Did you take a dislike to the place?"

"No, no, ma'am; I likes Lunnon well enough, but Lunnon don't like me. Why,

Why, I had heard something of the noise and bustle of Lunnon; but sitch a confusion, sitch wicked bawling, sitch swearing, I did not expect to find. So, as I had heard of the tricks they play upon country folks, I was afeard they would cheat me with my eyes wide open; and so, ma'am, the first thing I do (all of my own head, ma'am), I bawled out as loud as I could for a coach."

"That was very clever, indeed," said Elizabeth, smiling.

"Ay, ma'am; but I thowt, thinks I to myself, though I am from the country, I don't want none on un to know that, so I bod the coachman drive to number five; and he axed me where? and I told him he was more of a clown than I, for didn't I mean Mr. Levison, of Lunnon?"

"And what, Robin, did he say to this?"

"Say, ma'am! why, he laft, and axed what street? and I tou'd him the best

street in all Lunnon, for that Mr. Levison was a gentleman who married the sister of our parson; and then he laft again, and said, if I couldn't tell him the name of the street, I might find my way afoot. And how do you think I crept out now?"

"Nay, I'm sure I can't tell."

"Why, ma'am, I remembered the letter you gave me, and browt that out; and he soon found Charlotte-street."

"And you saw Miss Darnley—is she well?"

"Why, ma'am, I can hardly tell you. When I first see'd her, I thought she looked mortal ill, and that she had lost all the red off her face, that used to be so beautiful blooming; but when I see'd the other Lunnon ladies, I found them all alike, and so I 'spose 'tis the fashion; but she was right glad to see me. And madam Levison tou'd me she knew a place that wud suit me, for a lady of her 'quaintance wanted a country sar-

vant;

vant; and so I soon got into place, and a rare nice lady she was; and the first thing she bod me do was to take a letter to a lady close by where Mrs. Levison lived, and she 'sposed I could make her out; and as she bod me make haste, I runned all the way. And I had heard that the footmen made a rare noise at the doors; 'I'cod,' thinks I, 'I'll be up to it;' and, ha, ha, ha! I can but laff to think on it—I took hou'd of the knocker, and, he, he, he! I stood knock, knock, knock, till they comed to open it; and I heard such scampering about the house, that I dare say they thought 'twas the duke of York, or some sitch great man; and so I gived um the letter, and away I come, and runn'd up stairs to let my missus see what haste I made."

"And she praised your diligence, no doubt."

"Why," scratching his head, "no, ma'am, I can't say she fand much

 pleased;

pleased; but she had two ladies with her, and they thought I had done right, for they did nothing but laff when I tould them how, all of my own head, I made sitch a noise at the door."

"No wonder, Robin; they did not expect such cleverness from the country."

"Well, ma'am, but would you believe it—though I was hired to 'tend my missus, she sent me down stairs and bid me say she wasn't at home, if people called. 'What, ma'am,' then says I, 'you are going out then, I 'spose;' and she agen bod me go down; 'but,' thinks I, 'though I am up to some of the tricks of the town, I an't up to telling a bouncer yet.' So I watched by the door, and she didn't go out; and presently a young gentleman comed, and axed for missus; and I tould him she bod me say she wasn't at home."

"And what did he say to this?"

"Why,

"Why, ma'am, he only smiled, and gi' me a card for missus, when I might say she was at home."

"Well, I am glad to find you managed without telling a falsehood."

"Oh yes, ma'am; but then the servants are so ill-behaved in the servants' hall, they did so laff at me; and then, ma'am, at dinner, though I stood the whole time behind missus, she never axed me to eat once; and so next morning I gave her warning—I must leave her directly: and she axed me if I didn't like my place; and I tould her that I didn't like waiting o' people, for I thought people were made to wait o' theirselves; and she axed me what I meant to do wi' myself? and I said, 'Ma'am, why, go home, and work, as other folks do, to be sure.' So she give me a pound-note."

"But you called at Mr. Levison's, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, ma'am, and ha' got a letter

for you, from Miss Darnley, and here it is, ma'am."

Having presented him something for his trouble, Elizabeth sat down to read her letter, which was indeed from Matilda, and ran as follows:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Since I have been in town, I have purposely avoided speaking on the subject you rightly supposed most interesting to me, and which, you frankly confessed, superseded every other topic in your estimation. I now throw aside the reserve you have found so irresistible, and which, I fear, you have condemned, as a breach of that friendship which has been so long a source of pleasure and profit to me. But indeed, Elizabeth, it has been a self-inflicted penance, for being determined to erase from my heart the image so thoughtlessly cherished, till

till it was become almost a part of my existence, I would not leave the sacrifice incomplete, by allowing myself, in any way, to speak of him, or to think of him. Hard, very hard, has been the struggle; and even now, had I left it to myself alone to extirpate an idea so enchanting, I had never compassed my purpose; but I sought a higher, a better assistant—I called in the aid of Heaven, and I trust I have succeeded. But the fault has carried with it its own punishment, for my heart has been so lacerated in the struggle, that its faculties seemed benumbed, and must, I think, be rendered insensible to another love.

"You have, I think, not been informed, that a week after my arrival here, I received a letter from poor Aukland, excusing his negligence in not tendering his farewell in person, previous to his quitting our neighbourhood, and informing me his mother's health was in such a state, that it called for every proof of

affection and tenderness on his part, to meliorate her affliction, and to calm her perturbed spirits.

"This, as it required no answer, received none; and my endeavours to root his image from my heart received no check from any importunity of his, till this day fortnight, when he again appeared before me, more amiable, more interesting than ever, for that fine flow of spirits which he held at command, and which sometimes led him into eccentricity, was now mellowed and softened by the grief he felt at having lost his mother.

"You so well know the enthusiasm, the fascination of his manner towards me, that it is useless to describe it. With all the glow of sentiment and feeling which characterized him in our happiest days, he approached me. He soon spoke of the loss of his mother—his voice became tremulous.

"This was the subject on which I

wished

wished to engage him. I adverted to the happiness of the blessed in heaven—I spoke of the influence of religion—in short, I gathered what I wished to be be certified in—that however nominally he might be a Christian, to the doctrines of Christianity, its influence and effects on the heart and mind, or to its necessity for the perfection of man, he was a stranger. His heart is cold, untouched by those truths so interesting to me—so necessary for my hopes of happiness.

" On the following morning he made me a formal offer of his hand. Elizabeth, I cannot recur to the scene which was then displayed. His frenzy arose to desperation. He accused me as the cold-hearted murderer of his peace—as one whom his death only could satisfy—yes, he would immolate himself to my wishes.

" I wept, I prayed, I attempted to sooth him by a confession of all I had

 suffered

suffered in endeavouring to conquer an attachment which could only, by its indulgence, be productive of misery to us both. I assured him of my tenderest sympathy in his sufferings; but all would not do—there was a fixed sort of wildness in his manner which filled me with terror; and never shall I forget his look as he glanced towards me, and said—'Do not alarm yourself—I am better now—*my fate is decided*—I shall be easy before night.'

"A most horrible suggestion was obtruded by his manner. I entreated him to see my uncle—to unburthen his mind to him—he would sooth and console him. He assented to my wishes. Still the desperation of his manner alarmed me—I dreaded every thing.

"He held out his hand as he was going—'Matilda,' he said, 'you will not refuse me one request—it is the only one I shall urge to you.'

"I hesitated—he grew more importunate

tunate—'Assure yourself, if after its being mentioned I can consistently, I will.'

"His countenance assumed a look of ghastly satisfaction—'Why, Matilda, do you look so terrified? I am quite calm. I forgive you, and shall soon be happy; but I must seek amusement. I shall leave you to-night, and seek employment, to beguile my thoughts from you in the interval. I am a soldier, you know, but have so little attended to my duty, that I am a terrible marksman. My pistols are with my luggage; will you then bring me your uncle's?'

"I believe I changed colour, for he pressed my hand.

'What is it you fear?' he cried; 'I pledge my honour, that I will be the bearer of them to you before you have left the dinner-table, when I shall obtrude myself on you for the last time.'

"I breathed more freely; I could not doubt his word, thus solemnly given, and I was relieved from the most distressing

distressing apprehensions; I had, without declaring my suspicions, gained his word, that he would make no rash attempt for some hours, and I flew to secure the right of its performance. He took the pistols from me, and as he took them, pressed his lips to my hand. I grasped them firmly—'You promise,' I said, 'to be *yourself* the bearer of these before night?'

'*I do.* Adieu!'

"My heart still throbbed with the tumultuous emotion his strange manner had excited, and my head ached intensely. I acquainted my uncle with every thing that had occurred; he attributed the manner which had so alarmed me to the effusions of a heated imagination, whose effects would soon wear off. To my aunt I was less communicative, knowing the sensitive feelings her bosom cherished, and the effects my fears would have on a frame so delicate.

"Ere

"Ere we had quitted the dining-room, the servant announced Mr. Aukland, and at the same moment gave me a note, which was as follows:—

'Let me see you for five minutes alone. I wait in the parlour.

AUKLAND.'

"Apologizing to my aunt, I left the room. He was pacing up and down the room when I entered; the pistols were lying on the table.—'Matilda,' he cried, taking my hand, 'I am going to quit you for ever. When I have left you, read this paper; and should you survive me, and should you be unmarried, will you attend my funeral?'

"I hesitated.

'Oh,' he cried, 'can calm, cold punctilio still hold its sway in such an hour as this?'

"The despair of his manner alarmed me—'Should you have formed no other connexion—should you have no wife, no child,

child, I give you my promise; but you will have many, many happy years to live.'

'I thank you,' he cried with animation; 'add then to your goodness, by receiving my parting breath.'

"As he uttered these words, he seized one of the pistols; his other hand yet grasped mine; and as he pointed the muzzle to his head, he drew me closer to him.

"Elizabeth, I did not faint—I did not scream; as I formed a prayer to Heaven for assistance, or rather as the thought could be formed, which told me there only could I hope assistance, I was inspired with resolution and presence of mind to avert the direction of the pistol. The ball grazed his cheek, and penetrating a mirror, shattered it to pieces: he endeavoured to grasp the other; I had yet strength left to struggle with him till my uncle and the servants arrived, and then I lost all recollection; a

succession

succession of fainting fits followed, which left me so weak, that I have not yet quitted my chamber; and so dreadfully has my mind been agitated, that this is the first time I have been enabled to hold my pen; and will my dear friend forgive me, if I tell her that it was to convey the lesson home to her bosom, that I now impose on myself a task so painful? for amid all your virtues, your splendid talents, and your fascinations, I have perceived a something of that passionate sensibility which has been so fatal to poor Aukland. Let the warning then not pass unimproved; subdue your feelings; seek from Christianity that humility and Christian meekness which will conduce alike to your happiness here and hereafter. I have been punished for considering this world as a scene for happiness. Oh, shun the rock on which my hopes are wrecked! But I feel faint, and Robin waits to take this. I will therefore only add, that a fever—a brain fever,

ver, was the consequence of poor Aukland's irritation, and he was several days on the point of death; he is now recovering, and is to join his regiment; when in your neighbourhood, I need not entreat my dearest Elizabeth to pay him every attention in her power.

"Do not be under any apprehensions on my account—I am now recovering. Adieu, my dear friend! if I have said here more than is consistent with politeness, attribute it to the interest, love, and affection, I feel for you; and write soon, to assure me of your forgiveness. With remembrances to every branch of your family, I am, most sincerely and affectionately, yours,

"MATILDA DARNLEY."

Elizabeth had scarcely perused this epistle, when Walter Darnley appeared before her; he brought a letter in his hand, which he said was from Mr. Levison,

vison, and that he had been referred to her for the explanation of an event which had kept them so long silent.

Elizabeth could not speak—she could only, giving him the letter, indulge in the tears she found such a relief to her heart. At length she was aroused by a slight pressure of her hand; she looked up, and found traces of deep emotion visible on the countenance of her companion—"Ah, Walter," she cried, "this is indeed an awfully-instructive lesson; teach me how to avail myself of it. I feel, I lament my errors; but tell me how I am to conquer them? My character is now moulded; yet I think, had I a friend constantly with me, who would have discernment enough to discover the errors arising from that ardour which is so inherent in my character, I could conquer them."

"Elizabeth," he cried solemnly, "you deceive yourself; no friend, at least no earthly friend, could render you this assistance;

sistance; you must seek the mediation of that Saviour who has died for you—you must search the remotest corners of your heart—you must root out every thought and wish which do not tend to the glory of your Creator. Yet there is another point I would mention (here his voice faltered); you are now of an age which will probably point out to you the expediency of seeking a partner for life. Elizabeth, you have been ever so dear to my heart, that my own sisters have not excited a nearer interest; this will apologize to you for my interference; delicacy perhaps would, under every circumstance, have commanded my silence, had not the regard I feel for you overborne its dictates. In your choice be guarded; do not be imposed upon by the idea of a similarity of feelings—let your taste, sentiments, and views, meet a partner who will respect them—who will not outrage them, rather than one who, partaking in your own impassion-

ate

ate character, will cherish your faults, and indulge your whims—your fancies."

He was going on, but a servant, producing a letter for Elizabeth, interrupted their conversation. He again apologized for his forwardness, and left her.

It is unnecessary to follow Elizabeth through the long train of feeling and sentiment which succeeded this interview; as usual, the counsel of her friends made a deep impression; she could not but perceive that Walter's observation pointed at Dermont; yet her heart clung so closely to his idea—it was associated with so many blissful visions—it had awakened so many rapturous emotions, that to exclude it was beyond her hopes, or even beyond her wishes; even the thought seemed a libel on his love.

Having dined *tête-à-tête* with her father, she returned to her own room,

about

about which a bird was fluttering; having released the little captive, she embodied the ideas this simple event created in the following sonnet:—

I give thee thy freedom; go fly
To my love on the wings of the wind;
Go bear him affection's soft sigh,
And fond wishes by friendship refin'd;

And arrest, in its flight towards heaven,
While yet warmly it flows from my breast,
The fond prayer for his happiness given,
Ere I sink in soft slumber to rest.

And when night spreads her mantle around,
To my Edmund the tribute impart;
That my form in his dreams may be found,
As his image is grav'd on my heart.

To my Edmund, sweet bird, go repair,
And to him each fond wish from me bear.

CHAPTER II.



"Change is the lot of all. Ourselves with scorn,
Perhaps, shall view what now so fair appears,
And wonder whence the fancied charm was born,
Which now with vain despair from our fond grasp is torn."

. . . .

Happy in thine ignorance,
Could'st thou but shun this heart-tormenting bane,
Be but content, nor daringly advance,
To meet the bitter hour of threatened pain. PSYCHE.

Surprises.

NOTHING can better exemplify the vanity of all earthly pursuits, than reviewing the changes a few months sometimes produce. In tracing the general history of our acquaintance, the extraordinary circumstances which have occurred to chequer

chequer their lives make this truth very obvious; but even in examining them individually, there are few indeed who cannot refer to a particular epoch, when the number of unlooked-for events, crowded into one short period, gives to time a duration, which, contrasted with its rapid flight in the common course of things, appears extraordinary and unaccountable, and which adds to the misery of the unhappy—which gives new force to the oppressions of the discontented, and which gives to uncertainty the deepest pang.

This conviction flashed on the heart of Walter Darnley with all its force, as he sought the Lodge, so lately the residence of friends united by every tie of sympathy and affection, for amid its shades, he fancied he should regain that tranquillity which had deserted him on his return to his native village. He involuntarily approached the door, which had

had so often been thrown open at his approach, when Elizabeth had so often, forgetting the cold rules of politeness in the impulses of a warm and affectionate heart, flown to meet him. He again saw the blush of pleasure mantling on her cheek—again viewed the tear of joy adding lustre to her eye—again felt the pressure of welcome, from her extended hand. She was gone; but she had left a vestige of that brilliant imagination he had so often loved to contemplate, for on the pannel of the door he read the following lines:—

Stranger! ere yet thy foot essay to press
The threshold hallowed of this calm retreat,
Oh pause! attentive to the varied joys
Which here have emanated, bright as love,
Esteem, and filial duty, could elicit.

In the sweet hour of youth, ere reason's light
Shone to display the various ills of life,
Gaily we sported on the daisied green,
(We the blest inmates of this happy home)
Beneath the shelter of yon spreading tree,

Whose yellow branches drooping kiss the grass.
This was the reign of thoughtless happiness;
And long in memory's world the time shall live;
Yet, like the shadows of the evening sun,
These moments flew, and in their flight have torn
The sense of pleasures, never to return.
But if the recollection of these joys
Can rouse the heart from sense of present ills,
How sweetly on the soul must press the thrill
Remembrance gives of that bewitching hour,
When my rapt soul awoke from slothful ease
To all the joys of sentiment!
When first Imagination shed her rays,
Sparkling and bright, with every varied hue,
Borrowed from love, and joy, and sympathy;
When Fancy, dipt in colours, ran her pen,
And gave to every object brighter tints;
When feelings of benevolent delight
Imparted to each form that met my gaze,
Perfection meant not for terrestrial things!

The first bright view of life is past,
And never to return. Yet memory long
Shall hover round these visions of delight,
And ever sacred to my heart that spot,
Which first such rapturous emotions gave

To

To cheer and glad each sense—where Friendship first
Usurp'd her gentle sway.

Each virtue here
First grew within my breast—affection's thrill
Here chastened first the laughing hours, and gave
The tear of pity and of tenderness.

Stranger! if more thou ask to wake thy heart
To purer contemplation of these scenes,
Learn that the firmest bonds fraternal love
Ere form'd were woven here; nor sever'd yet,
Though various homes and different climes contain
The beings nurtur'd here in infancy;
And as in death's chill hour the spirit flies
To greet and hover round the friends on earth,
Who cheer'd its passage to the world of bliss,
So will the silent, contemplative hour
Be given by every inmate of these walls
To this the scene of every youthful joy.

"Then perhaps her thoughts are now meeting mine, and, like me, she feels a regret that those moments, so endearing, so soothing, are gone."

 He

He looked around him; the last rich beams of an autumnal sun were gilding the scenery which environed the shades he was contemplating; not a breath disturbed the tranquillity, not a sound met his ear, but what was soothing to his soul—the horn of the reaper, made musical by distance—the hum of busy voices sinking into silence—the rustic evening song faintly sounding across the shrubbery. It was such an hour as, tranquillizing the mind, lifts it to its Creator, and disposing it to the reception of pious meditation, seems, by refining the senses, to dispose them to receive the truth.

"Whatever is, is right;" at least this was its effect on the heart of one ever under the immediate influence of disappointment: his thoughts again recurred to the rapid transition of this transitory life. It was in the spring he parted from Elizabeth, then under the influence of an ardent attachment to Edmund

mund Dermont. She was now the wife of major Beverly! Her father, in all the gaiety of health, shaking him cordially by the hand, had anticipated the pleasure with which he should enjoy the autumnal field-sports—he was cold and senseless in his grave. Frances, the beautiful, blooming girl, careless of every thing but the enjoyment of the moment, was now pining in a hopeless attachment to Aukland, the man who had just escaped self-immolation, after madly seeking pleasure amidst the haunts of vice—the phrenzy of dissipation; whilst his sister, his beloved Matilda, was now only emerging from the melancholy resulting from the consciousness of having bestowed her affections unworthily.—"And what then am I," he mentally exclaimed, "who yet cherish in my bosom a love which will for ever preclude the enjoyment of another? Why not, by a vigorous effort, banish from my mind what cannot but tend to disappointment?"

He paused, for he felt to cease to love what was so beautiful, so captivating, was impossible; and he now, for the first time, determined that it was the union of error and virtue in the person of her his bosom cherished, which produced the fascination his heart had felt. It was her impassioned character which, diffusing itself over her thoughts, feelings, and manner, had given them a charm, which rigid duty, or cold propriety, could never restrain. But in making this discovery, he felt that his fault carried its punishment with it; for in suffering his imagination to impose on his judgment, his happiness had received a shock which could never be overcome. He felt his error, and it added to his humility. He tremblingly proceeded to a yet closer investigation of his sentiments; he feared to find that where error had made such terrible inroads, guilt might intrude; but his anxiety here was calmed; there was nothing in his

his bosom which might not have found entrance there, had Elizabeth become the wife of a brother; and yet he felt his fate to be entwined with hers; was she unhappy, he could never know peace—was her bosom the seat of joy, he could then be tranquil; he would think of her as one whose faults must teach him to distrust his own heart—whose enthusiasm of virtue should instruct him to endeavour to attain the height her glowing ideas had pictured as possible.

CHAPTER III.

> "She never look'd so kind before;
> Yet why the wanton's smile recall?
> I've seen this witch'ry o'er and o'er;
> 'Tis hollow, vain, and heartless all."

Death—Vanity in Love's Garb.

LEAVING our young enthusiast to the indulgence of his solitary meditations, we will return to Elizabeth, whom we left, just six months since, in the enjoyment of as much felicity as youth, health, and hope, could be supposed to impart.

This happy temper of mind was first interrupted by the indisposition of her father, which, though trifling in itself, acting as it did on a frame debilitated by a course of dissipation, and inflamed by intemperance,

intemperance, soon assumed an alarming appearance. Her first effort was to send for her sister Frances, who arrived only in time to receive his last breath.

Death is always awful; to the young it is terrible. Mr. Beverly, with all his faults, was a fond, and not an unkind father. The few virtues he possessed were prominent; in the contemplation of them his vices were forgotten by his warm-hearted children, who, in mourning a parent, lamented their only natural protector and guardian. The event was so sudden, that Elizabeth had no time to acquaint Mr. Linley, who, with the attorney, was the acting executor of her father's bequests. She had now to apprise him of his dissolution. He came immediately; and the will being opened, it was found he had left his property to be equally divided between his three children, Lucinda, Elizabeth, and Frances, after paying two hundred pounds to

 lady

lady Worthing. This was not considerable; the very expensive style in which they lived, the indulgences Mr. Beverly allowed himself, had nearly swallowed the income he gained by his marriage, and which now went to the male heir.

The first burst of grief being over, Elizabeth's thoughts wandered to Edmund, to whom now she could alone look for protection and consolation. She planned the time that would elapse ere he would visit her—she contemplated the particular expression of countenance with which he would approach her—the tones of his voice, modulated to a tenderness soothing and consoling, and he was proportionally drawn to her, as she had lost one who filled a portion of that heart which was now almost exclusively his — Oh yes, she should be happy—she would devote all her time, till fate had destined her for his wife, with her sweet friend, lady Worthing; her house had

had been so frequently offered to her, and she would be so much gratified to return the favours she had received from Mr. Beverly. Her income, though not large, would enable her to make an adequate compensation for the trouble she should occasion.

Her hopes in this respect were confirmed by the appearance of lady Worthing, who came to sympathize with, and administer comfort to, her young friends. Her manner was more than usually seductive, and she seemed to study more than ever to wind herself about the heart of Elizabeth, which, softened by grief, yielded readily to her influence. She passed the time of the funeral with them; and promising to renew her visit, took a tender and affectionate leave.

On the following week, captain Bennet, who had left the neighbourhood,

called, and sought, by every attention in his power, to convince Elizabeth (to whom he had always been fondly attached) of the sincerity of his friendship —his wish to be considered in the light of one who tenderly esteemed her, and who hoped to meet from her a return of the same sentiment, which he would endeavour to deserve.

Elizabeth answered to these professions with rather more than her usual prudence—that, situated as they now were, they could not, consistently with propriety, receive the visits of any gentlemen, but that she would ever bear in mind his attentive kindness to her, and accord him the sentiments they could not fail to excite.

He looked disappointed, but said no more.

Elizabeth now more than ever regretted

gretted the absence of her friend Miss Darnley; for the high spirits of Mr. Beverly, though sometimes ill-timed, had certainly frequently contributed to enliven the solitude of the Lodge; and in general his manners towards her were so warmly affectionate, that she felt the deprivation, even independent of the ties of nature, which death had so suddenly rent asunder.

Lady Worthing now made her promised visit to the Lodge. Never had she appeared so elegant, so captivating, so agreeable. Her manners, carefully modelled upon the Chesterfieldian system, were mellowed by the touching warmth of nature, imitated in a way that no pen can describe, no language impart.

On the third evening of her arrival she proposed a walk to Elizabeth; and whispering Frances she wanted to speak to Elizabeth on her attachment to Edmund, and

and therefore would prefer a *tête-à-tête,* the latter excused herself from joining the party; and lady Worthing, taking the path to the little wilderness, seemed quite to have forgotten the subject she purposed to discuss, so completely was every consideration lost in the more than sisterly love, more than friendly esteem, and almost more than lover-like admiration, she professed for Elizabeth; and never were professions of regard more welcome to the heart chilled by Edmund's neglect, who appeared to have forgotten such an object as herself existed. She expressed, in the most animated language, the pleasure she felt, and how much she wished it was allowed her to prove in any way her sense of his tenderness.

"My dear girl, were I to put these professions to the trial, would you then not shrink from them?"

"Never," she cried, with enthusiasm. "Try me; do *not* depend on professions;

sions; let my actions speak; I ask no more."

"And can you, Elizabeth, setting aside the cold maxims of worldly prudence, dare to think and act as your feelings dictate?"

"Louisa, my affection for you supersedes every feeling in my bosom but one; my life I could sacrifice to your happiness—why then annoy me with doubts so disgraceful to me and yourself?"

"Enough, my sweet girl; it is not that I distrust your heart that I have thus far hesitated, but the step I am about to take is so in defiance to the dictates of rigid propriety, that I was afraid your youthful inexperience might startle at it as heinous, when, in reality, it is an action which virtue approves, and the duty we owe to each other sanctions. The affection I felt for sir George will, I hope, in your bosom at least, who watched its rise and progress, do away any unpleasant suspicion which might

arise there, when I add, that I came here to-night to meet captain Bennet, who—"

"Captain Bennet! *you* meet captain Bennet!" cried Elizabeth, looking pale.

"Ah, Elizabeth, I find it was not without reason I distrusted your firmness. It has, throughout life, been my misfortune to be disappointed when I looked for friendship."

"I have not deserved this; yet surely in an action which would carry with it so much of the censure of the world, which my own reason disapproves, I *ought* to hesitate—I ought to endeavour to dissuade you from committing——"

"Before you know my motive for projecting such an interview, you will know how much resentment Bennet expressed when I first broke to him my intention of marrying sir George. He then vowed that I should never have the letters he held of mine. Now his situation in life, exposed as he is to the taunts of his brother officers, the goadings of

his

his own disappointment, and a thousand other circumstances which it is impossible to foresee, may lead him, some time or other, to display them. Now though there is nothing in these letters which, taken in the exact sense in which they were written, could tend at all to criminate me, yet there may be many allusions which are liable to misconception. I have repeatedly written for them."

"You repeatedly write to captain Bennet!"

"I mean—that is, I have written to beg him to return these letters, and he has uniformly refused; but at the same time he has hinted, that in a personal interview he could refuse me nothing. I therefore promised to see him to-night, and what can you fear, Elizabeth? you are with me. I *love my husband*, and is not that a sufficient safeguard?"

Before Elizabeth could answer, captain

tain Bennet was in sight; and it is impossible to express the horror she felt when she saw lady Worthing rush forward, and throw herself on his bosom, exclaiming, at the same time—"Oh God! and do I see you again?"

Captain Bennet turned pale, and tremblingly staggered beneath his burthen, and the tears rolled down his cheeks as he gazed on her—"Oh Louisa," at length he cried, "you have ruined yourself and me! My peace of mind is irrecoverably gone; and yours——"

"Oh," she cried, despairingly, "mine can now be found only in the grave!"

"For Heaven's sake!" cried Elizabeth, whose feelings were outraged by this violation of delicacy, virtue, and every principle so sacredly appropriated to the female heart, "for Heaven's sake, recover yourself! remember you are a wife, and that the arms which surround you are not those of your husband."

"Even though that husband is the most

delicate,

delicate, the most kind, the most attached of friends, I shall never see him again;" and would you tear him from me?"

Captain Bennet then said—"Miss Beverly, leave us for a few moments; I hope to be enabled to sooth and calm her."

Elizabeth threw herself on one of the seats that had so often been a resting-place for her; and, scarcely able to support herself, she welcomed its support.

She had not yet recovered from the surprise the unexpected conduct of lady Worthing had awakened in her bosom. Immediately after her pointed declaration that she loved her husband, to give such unequivocal testimonies of her devotion to another, and that other the man she had herself rejected for her husband! Elizabeth knew not yet the influence of either ambition or vanity. Had the Gallic emperor laid his kingdoms at her feet, with the liberty to choose from

among

among his slaves for the man who should share them with her, she would have rejected them with disdain, even with only her present hopes of making the object of her affection the partner of her future life; and could only a smile have gained her the devotion of the most fashionable beaux, she would not have moulded her lips to its magic influence, careless of admiration while Edmund loved her. She had never for one moment doubted but that sir George was passionately beloved by his wife; much less, feeling as she did, could she conceive that the scene which had so much shocked and wounded her feelings, had been revolved in the mind of this accomplished actress ever since her determination to see captain Bennet, which determination had occupied her mind from the time she heard he was recovering the tranquillity her marriage had robbed him of, and in the smiles of a young and beautiful heiress, was seeking a consolation for his early disappointment.

disappointment. She well knew his heart; she well knew that to regain her empire over it, she need only feign the love he had once believed himself in possession of. I say believed, for the heart of a coquette, in reality, feels only what administers to her vanity, never in possession of those strong feelings which are always originally united with generous and noble sentiments. She had yet taste enough to admire their expression in others, and skilfulness to apply them to her own purposes, when their display did not interfere with the elegance she always deemed an indispensable requisite in her appearance. A fainting fit was an admirable appendage to the graces; for the languor it indicated served admirably to display the graces of her really-elegant person. To an hysteric fit she had no violent objection; because, though in its practice the countenance must be distorted, the contortions into which the whole figure was thrown allowed

lowed it to be hid; and immediately after the sentiment it had excited was over, every thing was restored to its original state, and the countenance was again placidly capable of the smile which usually graced it. But to weeping she had an insufferable aversion; it bestowed neither delicacy nor elegant pensiveness; and the swollen eyes, inflamed cheeks (to say nothing of the irreparable mischief it occasioned to the colours with which she loaded her face), she deemed, made very little amends for the display of feeling it indicated. She did, indeed, sometimes apply her cambric to her eyes, and then a heavy sigh or two, and a piteous adjuration of "Oh Heaven!" or even something more sacred, called quite as much attention.

Elizabeth, deeply revolving the events of the evening, and vainly endeavouring to account for a conduct to which she could find no clue, heeded not the lapse

of

of time, till approaching footsteps occasioning her to look up, she perceived the captain and lady Worthing waiting for her. She arose in silence; but each taking a hand, thanked her in the most animated, the most soothing language, for the kindness she had shewn them.

In consequence of her earnest entreaties, captain Bennet immediately left them, but in parting said to lady Worthing, emphatically—"Remember!"

"Oh, do not fear me!" she added, and they parted.

A silence of some minutes succeeded, which was broken by lady Worthing making an observation on the beauty of the evening.

This was quite unheeded by Elizabeth, but awakening from her reverie, she eagerly said—"And have you procured the letters?"

"Not

"Not the letters, but the promise of them;" and she added, "I much fear my best friend will condemn me, when she hears that I have promised to-morrow night to receive them from Bennet."

"Oh, Louisa, for Heaven's sake, pause ere you plunge down the precipice, on the brink of which you now tremble!"

"My dear *prudish* sister, what is it you fear? you will be with me."

"No, lady Worthing, I have already, by my presence, sanctioned one interview; I cannot meet captain Bennet again with you."

"Cruel, unkind Elizabeth! Oh," she cried, taking her hand, "by all the care and attention which I devoted to your youthful and yet unformed mind—by all the love I ever bore you, I entreat you to accompany me to-morrow night —See him I must; I have sworn it. By your company you will prevent another meeting—you will save me from worse

than

than death—you will shield me from the world's disdain."

"Could I but save you from the consciousness of acting incorrectly, what would I not venture! but I can clearly comprehend that a meeting now will but make you more anxious to see again the being who *has influence enough* over you to make you forget what is due to yourself, your husband—your pupil," she continued, the tear glistening in her eye, "her whom your precepts first taught to love virtue—to love virtue for its own sake."

"Oh, Elizabeth! God forbid that I should in any way contaminate that mind, so pure, so guiltless! no, rather let me meet the disgrace I merit. And yet, what virtue is outraged—what decorum violated? I see captain Bennet as a friend—as one I have deeply injured. He asks it of me as a balm to his wounded feelings. I injure no one —my husband's peace can never be im-

plicated—he can never know of this step."

But it is useless to follow her through all the subtle arguments she advanced to persuade Elizabeth to be her companion on the following evening—it is sufficient to say she consented.

The afternoon of this day Frances had devoted to a sick neighbour; the *friends*, therefore, at lady Worthing's intimation, sought the wilderness almost immediately after dinner; and when there, Elizabeth, taking a book which captain Bennet had prepared for her, sought the hermitage, and endeavoured to fix her mind on its contents; but it would not be—the tranquillity of the hour, interrupted only by the breeze sweeping through the trees—the place, the scene of so many bewitching remembrances, and which she was now on the point of quitting for ever—all disposed her

her heart to melancholy; and the consciousness of the impropriety she was sanctioning did not contribute to heighten her spirits.

Her thoughts then reverted to Edmund; but even this subject afforded nothing to cheer her. His conduct seemed to evince that he had forgotten her. He had indeed told her it must be wrapped in mystery—he had pledged himself to unravel it to her as soon as he was at liberty—he had called on the Father of the fatherless to witness how truly he loved her; but yet it was not a moment to assist the soothings of hope; she found the necessity for exertion, and sat down to pen the following lines:—

Oh! why are the pleasures that solace us here
So light and inconstant, so vain and so fleeting?
E'en while joy claims a smile, sorrow sanctions the tear,
Like the sunshine of April in dark clouds retreating.

So like the first blush of the morning, that thrills
To the sensitive heart with enrapturing pleasure—
Like the first dawn of love, which delightfully fills
The bosom of youth—a dangerous treasure.

So like the bright gleam of the meteor at night
Swift darting thro' gloom, vivid brightness disclosing,
Then in darkness withdrawing its treacherous light,
Leaves a desolate shade in the valley reposing.

Like the gay dream of hope lightly beaming on youth,
So enchanting to view in its fanciful splendour,
Which beneath the stern glance of immutable truth,
To air all its glorious visions surrender.

'Tis to tell us that happiness, sought for below,
Ever shuns the rude glance of the victim of passion—
That this earth is a path strew'd with sorrow and woe,
Man the pilgrim who journeys, but merits compassion—

That felicity 'bides in the regions above—
That resign'd we must bow to the mandates of Heav'n—
That our God is a father who chastens in love,
Who demands our assent to the rules he has giv'n.

She

She had just made a rough copy of this, and was reading it over, to make the corrections she thought it required, when she was interrupted by the hasty entrance of captain Bennet. She looked up with pleasure and surprise, not expecting they would have voluntarily separated so soon.

He placed himself beside her, and perceiving how she had been employed, began a flattering eulogium on her talents. —She made no answer to his compliment, but inquired for lady Worthing. —He replied, that lady Worthing had purposely given him this opportunity of making a request to her he trusted she would not disregard—that she would sanction by her presence his interviews with lady Worthing.

But though he adduced every argument passion or sophistry could adduce, to wring her consent to a measure her

reason and her heart alike disapproved, though he threw himself on his knees to obtain her consent, she was inflexible. At length, to terminate a conversation really distressing to her, she proposed seeking lady Worthing; but she was not in the wilderness; and Elizabeth surmised, to avoid interrupting a conversation so interesting to her, she had sought the house.

How would every emotion of her soul have been called into action, could she have understood that Edmund, he whose absence she had so bitterly lamented, was her companion! but she found her alone; and Frances arriving at the same moment, prevented the events of the day being discussed.

The time now approached for the orphan sisters to leave the residence which had hitherto sheltered them; and this separation, the first they had ever known,

weighed

weighed heavily on their spirits. Frances had found a home in the kindness of Mr. Linley; and Elizabeth, in conformity to lady Worthing's often-repeated wishes, paid a visit to her, till the actual amount of her property being ascertained, might enable her, in conjunction with her sister Frances, to take some steps preparatory to their residing together.

Of Edmund Dermont she had never heard: no message, no inquiry of her health, nothing that could evidence any degree of interest in her concerns, had escaped him. As it was not the common romantic sentiment talked of by school-girls, and depicted by novels, that filled the bosom of Elizabeth, her perception of this unkindness was not dissipated in words, but it lingered in her heart—not wasting her spirits, but proudly rousing them. She had never told her love—he had never asked the con-

 fession.

fession. Had he betrayed any doubts on the subject, so perfect was her confidence in his affection, his truth, his honour, every feeling of her heart—that heart which beat but for him—had been discovered to him; for such was the natural frankness of her generous nature, that she would to him, her soul's chosen inmate, have breathed every sentiment.

To wean him from her memory was impossible—he was associated with every action, however trivial. The form of a cap, the colour of a ribband, the arrangement of a curl, were all regulated by the preference he had shown; and since her acquaintance with him, the cultivation of her mind had been more than ever attended to; for Edmund had said, he hoped, when he married, his wife would be superior to him in mental acquirements; and never had she displayed so much ability as since this confession escaped him. To make herself a companion

panion for Edmund, what a stimulus to exertion!

Had she been left entirely to her own reflections, the strength of her fine understanding, and the delicate rectitude of her moral perceptions, would have assisted her to subdue a passion she could not overcome. The undertaking would have been arduous, but its accomplishment would have been noble—it would have been worthy the ardour, the enthusiasm of her character.

CHAPTER IV.

Vain are the scenes of death, the pains of prayer,
Still memory lives, still Abelard is there.

Pains of Memory.

. . . .

Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear,
It may not be. *Lady of the Lake.*

. . . .

Is all the council that we two have shar'd,
The sister vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us, oh! and is all forgot?

SHAKESPEARE.

Treacherous Friendship—Treacherous Love.

IN Fir Grove, the residence of sir George Worthing, Elizabeth, for a time, met every attention. She almost forgot the caresses and parting tears of her beloved Frances.

Frances, or rather, she thought of them but to draw her yet nearer to her heart. Every week did she receive a letter from her sweet and amiable sister, and every week took from her an answer, dictated by the most generous affection and ardent friendship.

But this calm could not last. Lady Worthing was too fond of admiration to suffer a " rival near the throne ;" and Elizabeth was a rival boasting too many attractions of mind and person to be tolerated; and finding every effort which would have engaged her an accessary in lady Worthing's interviews with captain Bennet unavailing, every artifice was resorted to, and every means sought, to render her abode co fortless, without permitting a complaint on her part, or enabling sir George to discover what was so unamiable in her character.

She hated Elizabeth, and she had now

an opportunity of displaying her hatred in its fullest extent, for report had given Mr. Dermont to Miss Byron, as an accepted lover. This furnished a never-failing theme for torture. She began the conversation one morning at breakfast, when sir George had left home early, on a party of pleasure.

"So, I suppose you have heard that your old flirt is going to marry Miss Byron?"

"Indeed! she has then, at length, accepted his apologies."

"I knew not that he had any occasion to make any, for report says that she has for some time been attached to Mr. Dermont."

Elizabeth's blood seemed all to have flown from her heart to her face and neck, which were crimson—"Mr. Dermont marry Miss Byron!"

"Oh yes, my dear! you know there is plenty of money; and men now-a-

days

days, seldom forget that is a necessary appendage in these expensive times. I am really sorry to discover, by your agitation, that you have not yet forgotten the fine speeches he made you, without any meaning—mere commonplace compliments, which every man of fashion has ready prepared for every girl he meets. But you will know the world by-and-by," she continued, smiling; "and I think the time is not far distant when you will regret having refused major Beverly—now his father is dead, his estate is worth having."

"Indeed," cried Elizabeth, seriously, "I can never repent not having united myself to a man so entirely dissimilar to me in manners and in mind."

And here the conversation, much to the relief of Elizabeth, was interrupted. She sought her chamber, that she might at leisure ponder over the intelligence she had just received. Now then femi-

nine

nine delicacy, pride, and principle, all united to command her to expel from her heart an inmate who sought not the pre-eminence he held there. Yes, the sacrifice should be made—she would never indulge in those delightful reveries which had him for their object—she would abstain from all those pursuits with which he was most intimately associated—she would lay aside the books he most approved, and relinquish the appropriation of sentiments from any casual study which might have received his praise. In music her fingers should abstain from the airs they had danced together, or the songs which had been applied to their situation—in writing she would no longer endeavour at the attainment of that style he more particularly admired: but the difficulty of the effort to be made appalled her, and she was compelled to summon all the dignity of her nature to repel the idea, that by continuing to him her affection, she should injure

injure no one human being. No one had a claim on her heart; why then consign it to that death of feeling which must follow a renunciation of his idea?

Never had Elizabeth seen lady Worthing so unamiable as during this day. By turns her ingenuity in tormenting was displayed in cutting sarcasms and contemptuous innuendoes. To complete her discomfort, some delay had arisen respecting the marriage settlement of her mother; and this rendered it highly probable that she could not command even her own little independence till her sister Frances became of age; and at night she sought her pillow with a sense of wretchedness she had never before known.

She was at length, in every way but that which would have been least perplexing, told by lady Worthing that her house could no longer be an asylum for her;

her; and in the manner in which this intelligence was communicated, her treacherous friend seemed to study that which would be most distressing.

Elizabeth's eyes were at length opened to the character which had to her so long beamed highly in all the glare of false sentiment and refinement. Her recollection ran over every circumstance occurring in her memory, which had given to her mind the fatal bias that had involved her in so much perplexity. Every event, now that it was considered uninfluenced by prejudice, spoke of the deceptive powers which had so imposed on her innocence.

The veil was at length undrawn, but, oh God! what a prospect met her view! the world, which to her lively imagination had so long bloomed a perfect paradise, now seemed a forsaken desert, without pleasure, without virtue, and destitute

destitute of any attraction to compensate for the heavy disappointments she had received. Forsaken by her lover, deserted by her friend—she too to whom she would have sacrificed her life, and whose dying words would have breathed rejoicings that she could so have yielded up her soul! Where now could she look for sincerity? She almost deprecated talent, as the mark of a bad heart; and she endeavoured to fortify her mind against the intrusion of other misfortunes, which she calmly decided were in store for her; but to any that yet might happen she deemed herself invulnerable.

Here the image of the gentle and beauteous Frances obtruded itself upon her mind; and the tears which her own distress had never elicited, now bedewed her eyes, as she contemplated her in the situation she filled at this moment, alive to the same insults—annoyed by the same unfeeling selfishness.

Her

Her meditations at length were interrupted by the servant, who delivered her a letter. She opened it hastily, and glancing at the signature, found it was from major Beverly, couched in terms of submissive but sincere love, and concluding with an offer of his hand and fortune.

In what a moment did this arrive! Elizabeth shuddered as she read. Of all her admirers, the major was the last who could have fascinated her imagination; yet of all those who had been offered to her acceptance, he was the one whom her judgment most approved. But hitherto her affections had been so arbitrarily under the influence of her fancy, that the touch of his person, the pressure of his hand, was avoided as if they would communicate contagion or death. Her eyes were averted as he rose to take her tea-cup, or assist her with her cloak; and at the tones of his voice,

voice, as obtruding on her ear in expressions of friendship or regard, the chill of disdain thrilled on her heart.

But that heart was now agitated by a variety of emotions too complex for herself to define. The major was moral and religious, well-informed, and possessed of all the minor virtues to render domestic life agreeable; but then his person was plain and awkward, his manner, unbrightened or unformed even by the society of the officers to whom his appointment in the militia had introduced him, were vulgar; but of his love for herself she could not doubt—it had been evidenced through years of hopeless coldness, which her manner towards him had displayed; and how deceptive the graces were, her own sensations at this moment convinced her.

In marrying the major she secured to herself a protector—she secured a home for

for Frances. Edmund would perhaps then dwell on her former love for him—he would be nettled, for he would at least perceive her attachment was of a nature to be overcome—he would perhaps repent his neglect of her; and she must then banish him her heart, for it would be criminal to think of him when she had plighted her vows to another.

How inexplicable are the windings of the human heart, and how difficult is it for even the most clear-sighted to ascertain the motives which govern its actions! Elizabeth, in pondering over the reasons which should influence her in the important decision she was about to make, would not acknowledge that the last idea with her had any weight, when it was the governing principle of her conduct; and she took her pen and wrote an implied consent to her lover's wishes, if he continued to desire her acquiescence after having heard all she had to

to advance; and then, as if fearing her own firmness, hurried on her cloak, and advanced to the post-office with the letter.

But as she paused on the threshold of the door, something whispered she was doing wrong, and reason said, "Be not precipitate." She would listen to its voice, and would go through the church-yard rather than the direct way, that she might have time to attend to its dictates—and its dictates were to give some time to consideration; and she would obey them; but she saw Dermont across the street—he was engaged in conversation, but his eye glanced towards her, and fell on the letter which was in her hand. She felt as if that glance had conveyed to him its contents; and an impulsive pride again confirmed her wavering resolution—she committed the letter to the box; and captain Bennet joining her at the same moment, she accompanied

accompanied him to the door of a cottage where a soldier's wife was sick, and saw Edmund no more.

The major, immediately on the receipt of her letter, mounted his horse, and gallopped over to the Grove. Elizabeth saw him from the window, and a chillness, as of death, came over her, and gave its hue to her face. She would have left the room, but she feared her power, and she dreaded a discovery of her agitation to lady Worthing. Her recollection returned, and with it a portion of self-command; and when he entered, no sign, save the crimson glow her cheek assumed, announced that she had any interest in his arrival.

The major betrayed none of that ardent joy which might have been supposed to characterize a man on the point of obtaining his most sanguine wishes; on the contrary, had Elizabeth looked at

him,

him, the would have read in his countenance nothing more than the quiet complacency it generally assumed when in her presence.

Her feelings were acute in the extreme, and bitterly did she lament the precipitancy which had hurried her into an answer she now considered as inimical to her future happiness. But though she could thus in her own mind trace all the variation of sentiment and gradation of suffering, she had determined her manner should be free from them; yet when the moment arrived which was to decide her future fate—when she found herself alone with the major, and heard his acknowledgments for the letter he had that day received, her reason resumed its full empire; and as she reflected she had now gone too far to recede, all the native dignity of her character seemed roused, and even her language was elevated, as she begged his attention

attention and patience while she portrayed to him the various emotions of her heart, from the time she had first known his love.

We will not follow her in her view of the incidents which had marked her life, and the feelings they excited in her bosom. She unfolded them all, even the change in her prospects, and her interest for her sister Frances, which had assisted to fix her determination.

She paused for a moment, but receiving no answer, continued—"From the tenor of this discourse, you must perceive that I do not love you. Indeed, I do not think I feel for you affection enough to become your wife. I have even acknowledged my preference for another; but if you still think your happiness can only be ensured in this way, I am ready to fulfil my promise to become your wife."

Neither

Neither disappointment or pleasure was marked on his countenance, as he declared, so firm was his reliance on her virtue, sense, and candour, that he did not for a moment hesitate to accept her hand under every circumstance; and that he did not fear but a very short time would erase from her heart any thoughts of another.

Having expressed his hopes, that an early day would ensure the happiness he was anticipating, she agreed, on that day month, to meet him at the altar, but determined, before that time, not to see him again; and expressed a wish, that no intimation of the approaching union might transpire. They intended, immediately after the ceremony, to set off for Bath, where the major had a house, and from thence to spend a month in exploring the beauties of Wales.

Every thing being thus decided, Elizabeth found her heart much lighter than she had known it for some time: her destiny was now fixed; and though even her imagination could not throw around it the brilliant halo which had once brightened her view of life, and lent its charm to every change, her mind, engaged in the contemplation of the new and arduous duties she would take upon herself, acquired energy in proportion as the day approached which was for ever to separate her from him in whom was centered every thought of happiness.

She now very much wished for the society of her sister Frances; but as she did not choose to make lady Worthing acquainted with her engagement till within a few days of its being completed, she could fix on no plan likely to accomplish her wishes; but the attentive kindness of sir George Worthing pro-

cured

cured for her this indulgence. Observing on the cheek of Elizabeth a tear, as she folded a letter she had just received from the dear girl, he inquired of her health?

"She is well," said Elizabeth; "and this tear was only called forth by her tenderness, and reiterated wishes to see me."

"And why does she not come over then?" said sir George; "I hope she understands that our house is always open to her as well as to you, Elizabeth."

"Indeed," said lady Worthing, "she very well knows I wish her to consider it in that light; but she goes into such strange society at the Linleys, that I apprehend she has no enjoyment for ours."

"We will try her, however," said sir George; "for I will go in my curricle for her in the morning."

Hours, days, and weeks, rolled away,

 till

till that arrived which was to unite Elizabeth to major Beverly.

Frances had anxiously watched her beloved sister; and if a sigh sometimes escaped her, its effect was almost immediately lost in some lively sally; or if a tear trembled in her eye, the expression of countenance which succeeded, rather declared it to be the solemnity of the rite she was going to partake, than any latent regret which occasioned it.

Lady Worthing was overwhelmed with regret and concern, when she understood how Elizabeth was going to throw herself away; but she agreed to meet the party at Bath, on their return from Wales.

Thursday was appointed for the ceremony. On the Wednesday evening the major arrived, and he had been preceded by a beautiful selection of pearls for the bride,

bride; who excused herself from seeing him on that evening.

She shut herself in her chamber, and Frances passed a sleepless night, as she contemplated the events of the morning, which she feared would be distressing, as she knew the exquisite sensibility of Elizabeth, and was well assured every feeling of her heart revolted from this alliance; but when she sought her room early on the following day, and viewed the smile which graced her countenance, and the blush which flushed her cheek, as she received the tearful kiss which Frances brought, she almost persuaded herself that she had been deceived, and that Elizabeth, in thus uniting herself, would be happy; and even lady Worthing, in the trembling step, the varying colour, and timid reserve of Elizabeth, could discern only the beautiful modesty which adds new charms to youth and innocence.

In her dress Elizabeth had rather consulted the views of others than her own taste, which would have led her to appear in her usual morning habiliments; she had not, however, lost sight of that elegant simplicity which distinguished her person; her robe and bonnet were of white sarsnet, almost entirely covered by a veil of the most delicate lace—white satin boots completed her dress.

Lady Worthing, Elizabeth, and Frances, went in sir George's chariot, and sir George and the bridegroom followed. Frances had provided great store of volatiles, for she was sure Elizabeth could never go through the marriage ceremony, even with the man of her choice, without that powerful sensation which must procure a temporary forgetfulness.

But Frances had never studied the human heart; and least of all could she enter into the feelings of a heart moulded

as

as was that of Elizabeth. In meeting at the altar the man who had called forth all the sensibilities of her nature, the thrill of happiness rushing through her frame, and pervading every faculty, would have rendered her quite unequal to sustain the awful ceremony which was to determine the colour of her fate; but now she thought not of herself; she had given herself to another—she had vowed to love him—she must constitute his happiness, and he believed she preferred another—she must then overcome those emotions which seem to appertain to such an occasion, lest he should deem them given to an object she was now bound to forget; and the tremor which marked her motion, as she approached the altar, was soon lost, and a composed, dignified serenity sat on her brow; and when the service was over, and she received the congratulations of her friends, not a tear escaped her.

CHAPTER V.

Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for ourselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd,
But to fine issues. SHAKESPEARE.

Motives for Duty—Sources of Hope.

THE little tour into Wales was a great relief to Elizabeth; while pausing on the romantic, beautiful, and sublime, everywhere obtruded on her, her mind was again elevated to the enthusiasm she fancied she should never again know—her taste was gratified—her spirits were soothed—and she felt relieved from that constant struggle with feeling which had been so oppressive.

They

They spent about six weeks in their wanderings; and much as Elizabeth had been gratified, she felt rejoiced to find herself again at her own fireside. Their house was large and convenient, and their door was soon thronged with visitors; and now Elizabeth found the want of some judicious friend, to point out to her the different characters now obtruding on her acquaintance, as it was far from her intention to enter indiscriminately into the visiting and amusements of the place. She however succeeded in drawing round her a select and social circle; for much as she now disliked visiting, and its necessary attendant, cards, she found the major attached to both— she made a sacrifice of her own inclinations to his wishes, and found for this little sacrifice a reward, in the satisfaction resulting from a consciousness of having done her duty.

In fact, her character had received a

transformation, which, to those unable or unwilling to trace the impulsive feelings of the heart, excited astonishment. The wild, visionary girl was changed into the judicious, prudent woman; the animated grace of her manner was now modelled into sober dignity, and the impassioned playfulness which had lent such an attractive charm to her conversation was mellowed into a chastened sensibility, less fascinating, but more interesting. Her pursuits were also widely different; her music was entirely discarded—its touch, in spite of her efforts to the contrary, immediately, with the force of magic, carried her back to those scenes she now endeavoured to erase from her memory. Poetry, which had constituted so much of the pleasure of her life, was also thrown aside; for its strains, when breathed even in the cause of virtue. tended but to soften and enervate the mind she now sought to strengthen. Her reading was now of the

the most instructive nature; and her mind, which had, before her marriage, been beautifully impregnated with all that was enchantingly lovely, was become finely stored with what was estimable.

In the character of her husband she discovered little to admire; and as she found it impossible to lavish on him the enthusiasm she had once known, she endeavoured entirely to repress its expression, and contented herself with approving what she was not obliged to condemn; yet she had sometimes the mortification to find all her sweetness—those attentive kindnesses so calculated to smooth and ameliorate the cares of life, which she lavished on him, and which, by an effort of mind, she would not allow herself to think painful, repressed by a demeanour cold and chilling in the extreme. It was this which gave the pang to her heart—it was this which

deadened the lustre of her eye, and gave debility to her frame; he indeed opposed none of her pursuits, but his concurrence in them seemed the effects of indifference rather than approval. Nature had marked a difference in their characters, which prevented the play of sympathy—that union of soul and sentiment which can alone give happiness to the married life.

On his wife major Beverly had lavished every sentiment of esteem, admiration, and love, he was capable of feeling; but his heart was alike unacquainted with that strength of attachment Elizabeth was so calculated to inspire and to demand, or that delicacy of affection which might have supplied its place in her sensitive bosom. She pined in secret; and that haughty self-sufficiency which had once formed so dark a shade in her character was now so much subdued, that a tear would sometimes be-

tray

tray the sense she entertained of the slights she now experienced; and this expression of grief brought forward every mark of attention it was possible for him to shew, till her grief was soothed, when he relapsed again into his characteristic indifference.

But the constant agitation of her spirits, and continued warfare with her feelings, could not be supported, even by a constitution strong as was that of Elizabeth; and it was on the bed of sickness that she received a conviction, which was balm to her heart, that she was indeed beloved by her husband.

The most unremitting attention was now lavished on her for a fortnight, during which her life was pronounced in danger; he never quitted her bedside, and her convalescence was expedited by the conviction that she had not sacrificed the dearest feelings of her heart to a man insensible,

sensible or careless of the offering. But a new, a dearer care was now obtruded on her—one which, in her dreams of youthful happiness, imagination had sketched in such lively colours, that the felicity promised by even love itself seemed lost and obscured in the brilliancy this emitted; and it was with the most poignant feelings of delight that she became convinced she should soon become a mother.

Here then was an object on which all the sensibilities of her nature could be lavished; she should no more feel that aching void her heart had known—she should no longer drag on a life, the victim of feelings undervalued and misunderstood; in this, the object of her cherished hopes, she should find a constant occupation. Oh, with what care would she watch the unfolding its infant mind! she would assist in the development of its ideas; and, oh! how carefully would she root out the

embryo

embryo seeds of those passions which had been so inimical to her happiness!

She now saw but little of her husband; yet she felt not hers a cheerless solitude, though little enlivened by company, for every idea was engrossed by the contemplation of the moment she should become a mother. Now she felt the full value of Matilda's friendship, for now, in writing to her, she could pourtray every emotion of her heart, for they were such as reason approved, virtue smiled upon, and religion sanctioned—emotions in which no one was so well calculated to participate as Matilda.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.



Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven;
And if there be a human tear,
From passion's dross refin'd and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious parents shed.

Lady of the Lake.

Fruition of Hope.

TIME hastened onward, and Elizabeth became a mother. Every hope she had cherished, every regret she had indulged, every disappointment she had known, was now forgotten, as she pressed to her bosom the little claimant on her affections; powerful and varied as had been the sensibilities of her nature, she had yet

yet experienced nothing to equal the sentiment now engendered—too pure to be denominated a passion, too powerful for a mere affection, she felt as if language wanted an expression to convey in one word the ecstatic tenderness which beamed on her soul; and as she presented the smiling innocent to her husband, she felt as if a portion of the love she bore towards the child was associated so closely with the idea of the father, that he had shared, without lessening, its claims on her heart.

Never had the major appeared so estimable as when caressing the little Frances Matilda, for her infantine beauties called forth that display of affectionate solicitude which Elizabeth had in vain endeavoured to awaken; it seemed to have given a charm to his existence he had never before known; and the animation which sparkled in his eyes, and the expressions which denoted his joy, were

given

given in a tone of rapture his wife had never heard him assume, so universal are the claims of Nature, and so exquisite are the pleasures which her unsophisticated dictates impart.

Could I have borrowed the pen of Elizabeth, which displayed, in the most animated and animating colours, the various employments, reflections, and emotions, then called forth, and with which she now delighted to amuse her friends, I should be tempted to communicate to the world the expressions of joy and tranquil pleasure the superintendance of her little charge elicited, in the hope that the few fashionable mothers who, insensible or indifferent to the duties imposed by the maternal character, commit their infants to the charge of mercenary nurses, might, from dwelling on the enthusiastic picture her glowing fancy has given, have been tempted to endeavour to awaken in their own bosoms a congenial

nial sentiment; for while the arms entwine a being, owing its very existence, the perfection of its faculties, its happiness or misery, to the exertions of a parent, she must own a heart cold indeed who can willingly forego the exertion of that character.

But how imperfect, how transient, is the glow of human happiness! and how feelingly did Elizabeth acknowledge this truth, as her medical attendants declared she must not herself attempt nourishing her child; but all their expostulations were vain—the infant was at her breast, and not for ten lives would she sacrifice the pleasure she then experienced, till a malady seized her, which, endangering the child's existence, compelled her to resign her intention. But now the romantic enthusiasm, so long obscured, having been again awakened by the emotions attendant on the maternal character, burst forth, and she vehemently

declared,

declared, that precluded the pleasure of performing the duty maternal fondness had rendered so exquisite, no hireling should usurp the love she considered as her unalienable right; and to gratify this caprice, the health, even the life, of her child was risked; but Frances Matilda was a strong baby, and notwithstanding every disadvantage, grew under the regimen her mother insisted on superintending.

Her attendance on the duties of the nursery was so unremitting, that she relinquished all society, except that which she could obtain after her charge had sought its repose for the night; and then, if she had no engagement abroad with the major, her sitting-room was usually filled by a few select or literary friends, whose conversation either united the unreserve of confidence with the beauties of science, or was confined to that display of affection or esteem so grateful to the

the feelings; or if alone, pursuing the paths of science, which ennobled and enlarged the mind, while they rendered it more capable of the task which hope pointed out as that which would delightfully fill her hours, at the same time it gave a continual source of pleasure, in contemplating the improvement she trusted would follow her close attention to the education of her child.

It would be delightful and improving to follow such a mind as Elizabeth's along the tranquil, rational pleasure in which it was now indulging; and to the moralist it would perhaps have furnished a matter for reflection, whether a character modulated as was hers, and changed by circumstances, not from conviction, would have recovered its original tone, or have gone on progressively improving, till age having damped the fire of enterprise, prevented any farther advance.

It

It is a subject which would allow a wide field for digression, as her situation was again to experience a change as rapid, and not less extraordinary than that which was effected by her marriage.

CHAPTER VII.

" Who that lives
Hath not his portion of calamity?
Who that feels can boast a tranquil bosom?"

. . . .

The sweetest rose will wither, while the storm
Passes the mountain thistle. MRS. ROBINSON.

. . . .

Be life or death, what so betides,
The state of virtue never slides.

Ancient Poems.

Reverses—A Journey.

IN the system laid down by Elizabeth, for the regulation of her conduct in the marriage state, that of undeviating, unlimited confidence was the one most strictly enforced; and never for a single instant did she deviate from this rule; not

not only every action, but every thought, thus passed in review before her husband; but even in this instance, the motives which led to this confidential intercourse were either not sufficiently understood, or not sufficiently attended to; sometimes she had the mortification of finding her auditor asleep in the midst of her communications, at other times it was interrupted by some smiling sarcasm, or again broken in upon by an indifferent topic; and never could Elizabeth draw from him a reciprocal unreserve.

On the subject of his income he was invincibly silent; in vain she led to a theme, which, since the birth of her child, had become highly interesting—no communication followed; she was supplied, even lavishly, with money; and she had only to admire any elegant or expensive piece of furniture, to have it conveyed to her room; common report

port gave him fifteen hundred a-year, and his particular friends believed his income doubled the sum specified. Their establishment was expensive, and had many useless appendages. She had once or twice ventured at a remonstrance on these subjects, but it was received with so much asperity, she did not venture to renew it. She was therefore much surprised by his abrupt entrance one morning into her dressing-room, with an open letter. The agitation she now witnessed, and which was so unlike any thing she had before seen, alarmed her; and going towards him, she eagerly inquired if any thing unpleasant had occurred?

"Unpleasant!" he exclaimed, "why Hartrop has failed! and he has just taken my rents and other monies to the amount of three thousand pounds!".

"I am much concerned!"

"Concerned! I must set off for London directly."

"For London, my love! to what purpose?"

"It is there the statute of bankrupt is executed."

He then proceeded to give orders to forward the execution of his purpose; and taking an early dinner, proceeded on his journey.

Though Elizabeth did not apprehend any lasting inconvenience from this loss, she was yet much concerned, because she found it rendered her husband uncomfortable; but in the cares of her nursery she found a resource which she felt would buoy up her mind in greater troubles than those she now dwelt upon, and the loss was forgotten.

The major returned from London; he now appeared calm; but he had no hope of recovering any part of the property his attorney had held. In a few

days

days he received intelligence of the loss of a vessel, in which he had been tempted to hold a share. These circumstances prepared Elizabeth for the embarrassments which followed; and she had now the mortification of holding the monthly accounts she had been in the habit of discharging, unsettled; and her observations now led her to conclude that she had overrated the major's income. Her expostulations with him were received with no better grace than her former remonstrances had been, but he assured her that the losses he had sustained, were they doubled three or four times, would necessarily occasion no difference in their expenditure; with this declaration she was obliged to be satisfied, and voluntarily deprived herself of many indulgences she had hitherto enjoyed, rather than receive money from him under his present embarrassments. Her sensations may therefore be better imagined than described, when a friend of

 the

the major's came forward, and informed her, in the gentlest terms he could command, that there would be an execution in the house before night.

Horrorstruck at this intelligence, Elizabeth seemed for some time to have lost every feeling; motion and speech were alike denied her, and she was alive only to the faculty of suffering; but a painful effort recalled her to herself—"Why then does not the major provide against this? with his landed property unentailed, he might certainly raise money." Her friend was silent, but his looks certainly expressed no motive for consolation in this suggestion. "My God!" she cried, "what more am I to learn? Oh, sir! you have undertaken this task—go through with it, and tell me what I have to dread!"

"My dearest madam, be composed, and I will tell you every thing. I have undertaken this office, and I must go

through

through with it. When major Beverly's father died, he left landed property to the amount of fifteen hundred a-year, with some interest in shipping. Upon examination, my friend found this property deeply mortgaged—subsequent losses have completed his *ruin*."

"Oh, cruel!—oh, my child! my infant!"

In this idea her grief amounted almost to suffocation; but she shed no tears; she uttered no further complaint; and thanking her friend for the manner in which he had sustained the unpleasant office he had undertaken, she begged him to go to the major.

She retired to her own room; she felt the necessity for exertion, and she endeavoured to tranquillize her mind; she would look to Heaven for relief; but, alas! she felt not the consolation in her

prayers she had been accustomed to receive, for, since her marriage, the beauty of morality had so imposed on her imagination, that discarding all ideas of a propitiatory sacrifice on the part of the Deity in the person of his Son, she retained the name, with few, very few, of the doctrines of Christianity; she dwelt less on the necessity of prayer than on the efficacy of thanksgiving. It was the religion of prosperity, of a proud mind, alike unfitted for adversity or a humbled spirit. She now remembered her vaunted boast of the dignity of the human character, and she determined her fortitude should not disgrace her cause. She sought her infant, and found from its smiles occasion to strengthen her in the peculiar frame of mind she now encouraged—"Yes," she cried, "for your sake I will sustain my trials with fortitude; and as thy passage through life will, it is highly probable, be marked with

with difficulties and sorrows, thy mother's example shall at least serve as a lesson to thee."

She now sent a message to her husband; the word sounded harsh to her ears; the expression brought to memory the idea of a protector — a superior, whom she might "reverence and obey." Was it possible to reverence one who had condescended to such dissimulation? — Could she obey one who had ruined her child? Her marriage vows recurred to her—she had taken him for better, for worse; these had been voluntarily uttered; all that she could do, that she would undertake. But oh, bitter thought! nothing could make her feel that she could do otherwise than despise—whom? her husband! the father of her child!

But though these thoughts passed through her brain with the rapidity of

 lightning,

lighting, her nature was too noble to permit her to "bruise the broken reed." He was now probably friendless; she would adhere to him, would sooth him in trouble, and cherish him in sorrow. Much as she had studied his character, bitterly as she had felt his insensibility, she was not prepared for the total dereliction of feeling he now exhibited. He met her outstretched hand with his usual coldness towards any action expressive of sentiment, and spoke of his affairs with openness, but mentioned them as irremediable; and glanced towards his involvements in the same way he would have done had his wife assisted in making them. He told her his estate must go to the hammer—that he had hopes when he got to London, whither he must immediately hasten, to secure a sum of money due to him, with which he would secure a passage to the West Indies, where he would endeavour to procure an appointment—and that the

most

most portable articles in plate must be packed, to secure them from immediate want.

"And what is to become of me and of your child?"

"Oh! you have friends who will take care of you till I get into employment, and then I shall send for you to come to me, should I be enabled to survive the effects of the climate."

"And when do you go to town?"

"Immediately; if the plate is not secured, it may be taken from us." Saying this, he quitted the room.

Every sense seemed now lost in that of astonishment. That any man could contemplate the ruin he had caused with the indifference Beverly displayed, was more wonderful than even the dire change which had occasioned an opportunity for the observation, on the point too of quitting her and the child perhaps for ever. Her heart, formed for the social

virtues and finer affections of our nature, could not analyse the causes productive of such apathy, and she almost feared a stupor, approaching to insanity, had produced effects which she could not but deplore, though suffering herself under opposite impressions. Feeling thus, she could not justify herself in suffering him to undertake such a journey alone; she would accompany him to London; but her child! How could she quit it?—how lose the consolation its innocent smiles would convey? To take it with her was impossible; she could not risk its health, and subject it to the inconveniences attendant on such a journey; and this was no time for hesitation; she must decide immediately. The sacrifice should be completed; her duty should alone direct her—her own feelings were entirely set aside; she must not indulge them; she must rather strive to strengthen her mind, to steel it against any further claims on her fortitude. She sought her husband

husband—she explained to him her intentions—his heart was softened—"Elizabeth, I have not deserved this;" but immediately relapsing into his own character, proceeded to tell her, that as it was necessary for him to be off immediately, she had better, early on the following morning, join him at the next post-town, and from thence proceed in the mail.

We will pass over the feelings which in turn warred in the bosom of Elizabeth, as she viewed her child, wrapped in the arms of sleep, as her memory hurried over the events of the last four-and-twenty hours, and paused on the dismal prospect before her; and seating her in the mail, leave her to the indulgence of her thoughts, uninterrupted by her companions, except an old quaker, who busied himself in making every arrangement for her comfort in his power; the other passengers were a girl of about six-

teen, apparently entrusted to his care, and an old lady, deaf and dumb.

The sweetness of Elizabeth's disposition led her, though absorbed in her sorrow, to make suitable acknowledgements for his friendly attentions; and if her person no longer boasted that animated bloom of health and happiness which the beginning of this tale described as so captivating, her sunken, yet still-intelligent eye, her pallid cheek, and the fragile delicacy of her slender form, possessed claims on the bosom of sensibility or benevolence, not easily resisted. The quaker confessed its influence, and seeking to draw her from the indulgence of her melancholy, related several stories, exhibiting traits of the sect to which he belonged. Having thus succeeded in drawing her attention, he next proceeded to speak of the peculiar tenets which characterized the *friends*. It was just such a character as was most likely to

draw

draw Elizabeth from the contemplation of her sorrow; but a tear, called forth by an infant the age of her Frances Matilda, was more soothing to her heart than even the consolatory voice of kindness, and its tones were assumed by her companion, though his accents were not modelled to words professing consolation.

"*Thee* seemest to love that child—art thou a mother?"

"I have one the size of this, and the laughing archness of its blue eyes resembles the one you see."

"It must surely be particular business which called thee from a charge so serious."

"Be assured a pang so heavy as the one I felt at parting from it would not have been lightly encountered."

"Perhaps thou hast lost some friend?"

Her silence gave a check to his curiosity, but it was not extinguished; and when

when they stopped to take some refreshment, the appearance of the major, who was on the box with the coachman, gave to it an added zest. At any other time she would have been amused at the character thus exhibited; the harmless curiosity, sterling information, fid-fad attention to trifles, and genuine kindness, forming a curious association.

Having gathered that she was to make some stay in town, and had not yet provided lodgings, he offered his services and assistance in any way that might be useful, and at the same time gave her his card, and told her he had a wife and daughter, to whom he would introduce her.

With a presentiment of scenes of trial when her husband should have left her, Elizabeth felt this kindness thrill to her heart; it seemed to her as if Providence had thus raised her up a friend to chear

and

and sooth her in the hour of sorrow; and though her reason could not sanction the feelings she now cherished, her bosom glowed with them; and when her aching head rested on her pillow, after breathing her thanks to the Giver of all good, they hovered round her pillow, and gave to her wearied eyelids repose, and a temporary tranquillity to her frame.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

This is the state of man—to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost. SHAKESPEARE.

....

Oh happy state! resembling death,
Why is your balmy stupor flown?
Oh, why restore a wretch's breath?
For I can only live to mourn. *The Mourner.*

Association of Ideas the grand Source of Pleasure—Officers of Justice—A Prison.

SHE arose at what would have been called at Elmwell a very late hour, but at the hotel where they had passed the night, it was 'deemed unfashionably early.

Elizabeth had never visited London; and

and the peculiar frame of mind with which she now encountered its wonders, certainly did not contribute to raise her admiration. Whether it was this, or whether it was that her lively imagination, sketching the picture, added charms which reality could not sanction, I know not, but certainly feelings of dislike, amounting to disgust, attended her residence there.

As their object was concealment, they took lodgings in the neighbourhood of Finsbury-square: as it was impossible to announce to any of their friends in town their arrival, they expected to find some difficulty in settling themselves; but having paid the week, for which they secured their rooms, in advance, they were put in quiet possession of them.

Elizabeth now began to think the time very long since she had heard from her faithful Bertram, in whose charge she

she had left the child, and therefore begged the major would inquire at the house where the letters were left, and was made easy by an account of her darling's health and spirits.

Bertram proceeded to state that they had scarcely quitted home, ere an execution was entered; she had, however, succeeded in securing her and the child's clothes. From the major she also learned that there were one or two writs out against him.

Deeply alarmed at this intelligence, Elizabeth entreated him not to venture out of the house. But he was deaf to her entreaties; and her fears made her his constant companion in his rambles, and she started if any one crossed the street suddenly.

Elizabeth found in her landlady that sort of fawning obsequiousness, more hateful

hateful than any thing to a truly noble mind. As she had brought no servant with her, it had been stipulated that the landlady, whose name was Williams, should find attendance. On the pretext of other engagements for her servant, she frequently pushed herself into her lodger's apartments.

On the Sunday morning, after having removed the breakfast equipage, she made a great bustle in sweeping the hearth, &c.; and, after many unsuccessful efforts to introduce a conversation, she said, "The catholic chapel is very near us, madam; and, if you wish it, either Sally or I will shew you the way."

"I have never indeed been present at their ceremonies, and at any other time might perhaps have been amused."

"Never at the chapel! are you not then a papish?"

"A papist! oh no! How came such a supposition across your brain?"

"Why,

"Why, madam, 'tis easy enough to see you are in disguise, and that my husband said. He says, says he, Harriet, do you mind and pay attention to your lodgers, for they is people of consequence; and so, ma'am, I thought so too; and when you put on your beads and your veil, and when I found you always so melancholy, I thought (oh, madam, pardon my boldness!) that you certainly were a nun, and were doing penance for running away with the gentleman who is with you; and, ma'am, Mr. Williams says he is sure you are very young."

Elizabeth smiled at these surmises, and she gave her companion some credit as she made these observations. Her dress, indeed, seemed to favour the supposition. She had selected, as a travelling-dress, a black kerseymere gown and wrapping cloak; and as she saw no company, she had consulted her own feelings

when within, and her cloak was laid aside, wrapping herself in a dress muslin veil, which she felt concealed her face and figure from observation; for the melancholy which now oppressed her made her shrink from the world, and she would indeed, with her child, have welcomed a retreat such as that her hostess had hinted at. To this dress she had mechanically added her jet beads and cross, which she usually wore at home, as the major admired the effect on her figure, and her little Frances made them an amusement.

Every hour now brought added grief to Elizabeth, for every hour seemed to place the major farther from the appointment he felt so sure would await his request. Of the friends he had relied upon, some were out of town; some were so engaged with business, they could not see him; and others had no interest. But the cold reserve of his

character

character did not now desert him; his resources were not extensive, but he had a perseverance in their application which almost promised to ensure success.

Elizabeth had one evening been vainly endeavouring to persuade him to change his lodgings, and he retired to bed almost displeased with the vehemence she had displayed in support of her advice. She had, however, received a letter from Bath; her child was well and happy, and she sunk late into a repose, which was so sound, that it encroached on their breakfast-hour. Their apartments (they had but two) were on the first floor; the sleeping-room, through the sitting-room; and their bed standing near the door which communicated with the latter, she was awakened by strange voices in the adjoining room, which were followed by a thundering at the door, and a demand for admittance.

The

The major, starting up, demanded to know who was there? and was answered by the landlady through the keyhole, desiring madam not to be frightened—it was only a little writ against Mr. Beverly, for twenty or thirty pounds.

"Oh! what is to be done?" cried Elizabeth, in that bewildered tone which gives to reality the semblance of fiction, and she almost persuaded herself her fears had conjured up a frightful dream to annoy her.

Before the major could answer her, another demand was made for admittance.

"You will wait till I am dressed, when I will join you—you cannot come into my wife's sleeping-room."

"Damn all that! 'tis you we want; so open the door, or we shall be compelled to force it."

"Force

"Force it at your peril," cried the major.

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than the door was indeed forced, and three men rushed in, the foremost with his drawn sword.

Elizabeth stretched her arms to her husband, and, giving a loud shriek, sunk senseless on the pillow. He flew to her, and, amid the curses of the men at having kept them waiting, succeeded in restoring animation to her.

But he felt almost sorry that she was restored to reflection, so poignant was the expression of grief and despair written on her countenance, as she viewed the group surrounding her, and heard their threats if the major did not immediately accompany them—"Oh, take *me* with you!—Do but take me with you! —Oh! tell them I am among strangers —and

—and what can I do here alone?—Pray take me with you!" and she grasped his hand with a vehemence which rendered it difficult to unloose it; and when they had broken her grasp, with the quickness of lightning she clasped her hands so firmly round his neck, that, in unloosing her hold, they tore the skin from the finger which touched her ring, while her shrieks echoed round the house; she was in strong hysterics, which were continued till she was quite exhausted; and then a stupor, resembling the effects of a large dose of laudanum, shut out from her the cares of the world. But, alas! she recovered to them too soon, though, for a few minutes, memory refused her aid to dissipate the confused vague sense of misery, amounting to horror, which pressed on her heart; but the dreadful scene she had sustained came across her brain, with every attendant circumstance, with

a clearness which convinced her it was a dreadful reality she dreaded.

Her landlady soon appeared, and pressed her to take some refreshment. She desired to have some tea, and begged her assistance to reach the sofa in the next room. She was vexed at the little fortitude she had displayed; the state of suspense she was yet in was torture—her husband was in the hands of bailiffs. She would go immediately to his attorney—perhaps he might detect an error in the writ. The thought gave her strength; and calling a hackney-coach, she sought the man of law, who promised to search out the major, and attend her as soon as he had found him.

Somewhat easier in her mind, she returned to her lodgings; but the idea of passing the night here was dreadful to her; a thousand fears were conjured

up

up by her imagination to torment her. The master of the house she had never seen; its mistress was that sort of character a generous mind finds it so difficult to tolerate; every species of low flattery and cunning, united to an insatiable curiosity, were conjoined in her person. But there seemed no alternative; she must not give way to unnecessary grievances—the real evils of life were surrounding her—she must seek support in herself—she must exert that reason which was given her for her assistance and guide.

About five Mr. Bevil the attorney called, and proposed escorting her to the spunging-house, where her husband had been carried. It was but a short distance, and she therefore agreed to accept his protection, and proceeded on foot to the place. She was shewn into a little, dirty room, where she found the major. For some time she wept without speak-

ing, but summoning all her fortitude, she listened to his plans, which were, on the following day, to proceed to the city jail, whither he desired his wife to join him for two or three days, when she might proceed to the country, and to her child.

Mr. Bevil had suggested a removal to the King's Bench, but as he was apprehensive of detainers, he thought his present residence less likely to be discovered.

Elizabeth returned to her disconsolate habitation, but sleep had fled her pillow, and she arose in the morning feverish and unrefreshed, and impatiently awaited the letter which was to summon her to share with her husband—a prison. Having busied herself in packing linen, &c. for the major, she was ready to obey his mandate, which the hasty note she read contained. It informed her he was then

then going to the prison, and desired her to join him immediately. Having discharged her lodgings, which the landlady had been careful to apprise her were engaged, and would be entered upon immediately, and packing her luggage into a hackney-coach, she found herself at the door of No. 9, Giltspur-street; but no porter awaited her entrance. She proceeded along a dirty passage; and entering a stone room, inquired for Mr. Beverly.

The man, having scarcely looked at her, pointed to a heavy door, with an iron grating, and laconically said—"That's the way."

Having demanded admission, after some little delay, she found herself in a large paved court, up and down which several men were walking, and a broken conversation, intermingled with curses and bursts of laughter, met her ears. Shud-

 dering

dering at the spectacle before her, she turned to the man who had opened the gate, and uttered her husband's name. He carelessly said—"Oh, the last comer," and directed her to a flight of stone stairs, while one of the noisy group, having on a velvet cap, crowned with a gold tassel, advanced, and with an impertinent freedom offered his services. She turned from him without speaking; and mounting the stairs, applied to the door to which she had been directed for admission. It was opened by a man, having in his person every appearance of squalid wretchedness. He desired her to walk in; and as she stepped forward for that purpose, she found herself in a spacious room, almost filled with men, bearing in their appearance strong traits of guilt and poverty. Starting from the notice she had drawn on herself, she escaped through the door, while one of the men cried out—' Oh, come in; we are not felons—only poor debtors." Having

ing now slipped a shilling into the hand of him who had opened the door to her, she begged to be conducted to Mr. Beverly. He made the necessary inquiries, and she followed him to a room in a different part of the prison, where she found him employed in writing to his attorney. He proceeded to tell her, that the prison was now so full, that it was impossible to secure a room to himself; of course, that it could afford her no accommodation—that she must therefore immediately return to Bath: and having proceeded to the Exeter coach-office, was informed that every inside place was engaged.

What could she do? To return to her lodgings was impossible; and stranger as she was in London, where should she find a shelter even for the night? yet her delicacy had always revolted from mounting even the dickey of a private carriage, how then should she support

the fatigue and terror which a seat on the box of a mail must produce? But there was no time for deliberation; the clerk was waiting her answer; he saw her distress, and said—"There are three gentlemen and one lady in the coach; perhaps they may be induced to admit a fifth; at any rate, I will make the effort." She thanked him for his consideration, and paying her fare, returned to her husband.

Having, in her absence, secured a room from one of the turnkeys, he procured for her some tea, which, after partaking, she proceeded to the coach-office, and found that the clerk had made good his promise, and had secured the consent of the gentlemen for her admission into the coach; but the lady would not submit to the inconvenience; she was therefore compelled to mount the box; but the coachman, as he assisted her to ascend in a rough way, assured her she need

need not be afraid, as he had promised Mr. Grey, the clerk, that he would take as much care of her as if she was his sister, at the same time testifying his displeasure at the inhumanity of the female within the coach, by swearing, had he been aware of her intention, all her baggage should have been left behind.

CHAPTER IX.

Or wherefore trace from what slight cause
Its source one tyrant passion draws,
Till mastering all within?
Where lives the man that has not tried,
How mirth can into folly glide,
And folly into sin? *Bridal of Triermain.*

In following our heroine through the many changes with which the period of her life we have been detailing was chequered, we have quite lost sight of those personages, with whom, though closely united, the events we have been detailing had little reference; and first, as we have been tracing in her person the miseries attendant on a fatal indulgence of the passions, or, rather, the folly of following the first impulses of feeling, instead of listening to the dictates of reason,

son, we would now call the attention of our readers to the female, scarcely equal in those intellectual and personal qualifications which were in Elizabeth the source of so much admiration; yet, by the advantages of early "Education," were placed so much more advantageously for application, that they became sources of happiness and honour.

We left Matilda Darnley suffering acutely under an act of imprudence, which her youth and ignorance of the world would perhaps have excused, or at least have mitigated to a venial error. Not so her own reflections; in dwelling on what had so nearly proved the termination of an acquaintance from which she had once augured so much happiness, she was led severely to condemn what could, to an unprejudiced mind, scarcely have been deemed an act of coquetry. The rash, ungovernable passion, which had led Aukland to an attempt

 which

which had so nearly completed his eternal ruin, at once weaned her heart from his influence; but in thus extirpating her love, every principle or affection upon which love is founded, appeared to have received a shock which no time could rectify, no circumstance replace; and she seemed to consider it a right her conscience must demand to submit to the self-inflicted penance of never more indulging a tenderness more animated than friendship for any human being; her affections, misguided as they had been, should never again have the power of misleading her judgment, but should all be directed to the adoration of that Being, through whose infinite mercy she had been saved the horror of knowing herself the cause of suicide; and though his mandates should be so equally diffused among the mass of her fellow-creatures, that their general good should be estimated, not her own individual happiness; and it was not suffici-

ent

ent that she should so far overcome her feelings to *appear* cheerful—that she only owed to society; she must also *become* so—that she owed to Heaven. She would not endeavour to erase from her mind the recollection of what had passed; those scenes only which might enervate her mind should be forgotten—those moments which love and confidence winged with delight, they must be abandoned; but the reflections which followed a discovery of the want of refleotion, of religion in her lover, must be brought to her view.

Having given up all idea of forming a union, which might, by calling her attentions to a family, have given occupation to her time and thoughts, she felt that to be a useless member of society, without any pursuit leading to a determinate purpose, would be degrading herself, like the unprofitable "servant,"

vant," who buried the talent entrusted to him.

Having no fortune to devote to purposes of benevolence—no rank to support, she, determined to enter into some respectable family, where, by superintending the education of the younger branches, she might essentially benefit society, and aid the views of Heaven.

Amongst the friends who occasionally added to the family circle at Mr. Levison's, was sir Edward Euston—a husband and a father. In him were united the manners of the most polished gentleman, with that simplicity of heart, and singleness of character, for which the gospel furnishes such a beautiful model; every action was the offspring of profound morality, governed by the most lively faith. Seduced by the youth, beauty, and innocence of his wife, he

he had taken her from the bosom of obscurity, to share his heart and elevated situation in society. Her temper, amiable and gentle, assimilated with the habits of those with whom she associated; and having no very correct idea of the precepts of religion, and no very definite opinion of the rules of morality, had bent submissive to the mandates of the *ton*, and entered with avidity into every circle where pleasure holds her court, unchecked by prudence, and almost unheeding the rules of propriety. By degrees her husband was slighted, her three sweet girls neglected, and her domestic duties forgotten or disregarded.

All that a father could do, was done by sir Edward for his children; but he had other claims on his time, and to consign them in these hours to servants, would have rendered his attentions of but little avail; but to resign them entirely into the hands of a female, and to

a female

a female educated for the purpose of *accomplishing* her pupils—the thought was frightful. But how could he, who went little into society, select a woman fitted for the important office? Sir Edward still retained some power over his capricious lady; for her allowance of pin-money was not large; and though subdued by the prevalence of fashion, her maternal tenderness was not lost, and her gratitude was almost equal to that of sir Edward, when Miss Darnley offered to superintend the education of the children.

By the judicious management of Miss Darnley, lady Euston, by degrees, became assimilated with her in the duties of her situation; and sir Edward became again convinced that his lady did indeed possess a heart and a mind—a heart susceptible of all the milder and more delicate feelings of our nature—a mind unstored indeed, but not unfitted for the

acquisition

acquisition of the useful and elegant acquirements.

These important discoveries were not made in a single glance, and their fruition must be the work of time; and had not Miss Darnley possessed the acutest penetration and most unwearied perseverance, the secret had never been developed, or the development had been followed by no beneficial effects. By the most judicious associations she drew lady Euston to love the duties she had before resolved to fulfil; and to be fitted for the fulfilment she had much to learn, and something to unlearn. But Miss Darnley would not leave her purpose incomplete; she laid a foundation for the education of the children; she assisted the mother. Her employments, however, did not prevent her discovering she could still appreciate worth sufficiently to think of uniting her fate in the most indissoluble bonds with one who sought

her

her love. It is true, it was not exactly the sentiment she had once known which now subdued her heart, but it was yet sufficiently powerful to have enabled her to relinquish birth, fortune, splendour, every thing but her virtue and her God, for the man her reason approved. It would have been delightful to trace the gradation of feeling her bosom knew—the doubts and fears, the uncertainties and distresses, which by turns clouded her judgment, and oppressed her heart, as this attachment gained strength. But my present view is to warn the inexperienced, not to offer a model for their imitation. I will therefore merely state the effects flowing from a right cause of feeling, and leave my readers to trace the associations by which they were preserved.

This was the situation of Matilda Darnley when her early friend Elizabeth Beverly quitted London on the box of

the

the mail-coach, who having, from the distracting circumstances of the last three months, neglected to answer the letters of her friend, and her friend busied in directing and amending the hearts of others, and of examining and questioning her own, on the new attachment it was forming, and in the belief that Mrs. Beverly was so delightfully employed in the duties of her nursery and her domestic arrangements, as to regret the time spent from them, had not *pressed* the correspondence, particularly as she was in no haste to communicate the recent change in her sentiments.

Had they been made known to Elizabeth just at this time, they would perhaps have inflicted an additional pang to her bosom, for in the gentleman who possessed sufficient attractions to draw her from her resolution of remaining unmarried, she would have recognised her romantic ball lover, Mr. Betham; and in

lady

lady Euston, the sister whom his affection had exalted almost to an equality with the celestial inhabitants of heaven, and she was the most amiable, the most interesting, and most beloved of sisters, till a winter in London, followed by the men and envied by the women, acting upon a mind, captivating from its softness rather than its strength, seduced her into that line of conduct from which the friendly assiduities of Miss Darnley recalled her.

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds, too late, that men betray,
What charm can sooth her melancholy?
What tears can wash her guilt away?

GOLDSMITH.

. . . .

Her guilty love was all confess'd.

SIR EUSTACE GREY.

The Seducer and the Seduced.

THE beautiful Frances has interfered so little with the business of the tale we have been relating, that we almost fear our readers have lost the interest her appearance might be supposed to create; but as we shall again, in the hour of trial, make her the companion of Elizabeth, we will refer our readers to the time of her father's death, which made her an inmate at Mrs. Linley's—the *protégée*

of

of her sister Lucinda, now the dashing wife of a country squire, aiming at notoriety, and blushing at the vulgarisms of her husband.

A situation more uncongenial to her wishes, or more unfitted for her welfare, could scarcely have been imagined. Deprived of the sister she loved, and whose protection, whose counsel seemed necessary for her guidance, as the trouble of thinking for herself was too great an exertion, she threw herself unconsciously upon the judgment of her present protectors. She laughed with Mr. Linley, who loved her as a sister; she bowed to Mrs. Linley's whims, who imagined her fortune gave her a right to be capricious: but to her mind, delicately formed, and rendered imbecile by indulgence, the coarseness of the one, and arrogance of the other, were almost insupportable.

Captain Aukland (for since the death

of his mother he had purchased into a regiment ordered abroad, but whose orders were countermanded) was again in the neighbourhood, and gladly availed himself of the hospitality of Mr. Linley to become his frequent guest. But though not the Aukland she had once known, his society was a balm to the mind of Frances, for she could speak to him of Elmwell, of her sister, of the little wilderness; nor was the theme less pleasing to her auditor; for though deprived of hope, his heart yet lingered over the recollection of the scenes of happiness in which he once partook; and in referring to what he was, the ductile mind of Frances forgot what he is—a gamester, a wine-bibber, and a libertine. To lose the remembrance of the hour which sealed his dismissal from the heart of Matilda, he had madly rushed into every species of vice to lose the degrading recollection, but in vain; it haunted him in

in his gayest moments; yet he shrunk from the warning.

Who could not perceive that the beauty of the artless girl would captivate the sensualist? and who could not anticipate that the arts of the libertine would eventually ensnare one so unguarded? But who could have supposed, who could have foreseen, that his influence could persuade her to conceal her partiality from all her friends—could influence her to reject the home Elizabeth had provided for her, because the well-known habits of captain Aukland had excluded him from the society there assembled?

Elizabeth, while she mourned her sister's estrangement, surmised not the cause; nor, in musing over the catalogue of ills awaiting her, imagined that the one most distressing would be prepared

by

by the hand she loved so well—by her whom she had cherished with almost maternal love—from whom she had never kept a thought concealed. But so it was.

Unacquainted with the nature of business, poor Elizabeth was almost heart-broken, on her arrival at Bath, to find her child, with its nurse, had, in her absence, been obliged to quit the home she had looked to for at least a few days' repose, and were now with her attendant's mother. Here Elizabeth sought them; and while clasping her sweet girl to her bosom, found a relief she had long sought. She wept, and hailed the omen as a solace to a wounded mind; but her sensitive heart had suffered too keenly not to affect a frame rendered delicate by contingencies; long had she struggled against the pressure of misfortune—her mind had borne up against its influence; but now that her exertions were no lon-

ger necessary—now that she had no opportunity of being useful—that she had no immediate call on her fortitude, nature prevailed, and hard was the struggle between a good constitution and grief. But the ties which bound her to life were not all broken; could she leave her child destitute? She prayed for life, she strove against death, and her life was granted to her prayer; but slowly did she recover, and dreary was the scene before her; no smiling faces now surrounded her pillow; her good, her kind Bertram, was her only attendant—the only friend who watched over her recovery; and her attachment seemed to combine the affection of consanguinity with the esteem of the friend, and respect for the mistress.

When Elizabeth came home, she was housekeeper to the major; but as she conceived it became a duty in her to superintend her own domestic concerns,

she

she candidly informed her of it; she was a woman who had received a decent education, and was particularly unassuming and respectful in her manners; Mrs. Beverly, therefore, offered to keep her immediately about her person, or provide her a situation with a friend, similar to the one she had hitherto filled. She was much attached to the major, and was charmed with the sweetness of Elizabeth's manner, and therefore, without hesitation, accepted the former offer; and so far gained her mistress's confidence, that, on the birth of her child, it was entrusted to her care, and she had nourished it with the tenderness of a mother.

Grateful for the kindness and attention she had received, she, with a constancy and firmness which would have done honour to a superior station, refused many advantageous offers, uniformly declaring, that while Mrs. Beverly could

keep a servant of any description, she would not quit her.

Elizabeth was many miles from her friends—her natural relations. From lady Worthing she expected at least a shew of civility, but had hitherto met none. Of Mrs. Linley, she scarcely thought; but from Frances, her beloved Frances, she expected some proof of love; and many were the tears she gave to her neglect. At length a bundle of letters reached her, which had lain some days at the post-office; some were from friends she had made since she married, containing general expressions of condolence; others offers of services, in general terms; and others, less worldly in their feelings, expressed an earnestness in her welfare truly gratifying; but all seemed ignorant of her present abode. In the handwriting she most particularly recognized, was that of Matilda, imploring her, by every tie of friendship, to inform her of

her

her present abode. The amiable Beatrice too begged to be permitted to see her; and the good Mr. Darnley requested, with an earnestness scarcely to be refused, that she would give him her company till some plan was established for her permanent residence. One from lady Worthing, in her usual strain of sentiment, proffering, in *general* terms, the most romantic expressions of affectionate interest; but no plan was mentioned which could conduce to the poor invalid's comfort. Mrs. Linley wrote, without even this affectation of sympathy, to regret that the many losses Mr. Linley had already sustained by major Beverly's imprudence, entirely put it out of her power to assist her.

I pass over the different feelings these letters excited in the bosom of our heroine, to state that she had formed her resolution; as soon as she was well enough to travel, she would join her husband.

She had already arranged her plans, and fixed the day for her departure, and was sitting, one fine afternoon, on an easy-chair, with her little Frances Matilda in her arms, when a gentle tap at the door awakened her attention engrossed with her child; she called—"Come in;" and scarcely had the words escaped her lips, when Frances, her sister Frances, entered, haggard, pale, and in tears. She flew to Elizabeth, and sunk at her feet.

"My dear girl!" said Elizabeth, "pray be composed."

"Oh, Elizabeth! sister! friend! promise me one thing—say you will not hate me—say you will not throw me from you!"

"Throw *you from me!* Oh, Frances!"

"Sister, if you would not have me expire here, do not delay to give me your word."

"I will promise any thing if you will rise from that posture."

"*Never*

"*Never* till I have made you the confession that now hovers on my lips; yet how am I to find words to declare to you my disgrace?—that instead of coming to comfort you, I am here to heap sorrow on your head. My sister, do not look at me; the blushes that will crimson your face, the shame that will beam in your eye, will kill me; but if you spurn me from you, I am an outcast from society. Mrs. Linley has disowned me, and lady Worthing refuses to see me."

Petrified by her manner, Elizabeth, as she would have entreated her to relieve her suspense, found not words to express her anxious interest; but too soon she gathered from the poor, misguided girl, that she was about to hear, "unhusbanded, a mother's name."

Astonishment is a term too unmeaning to express the complex sensations which agitated the bosom of the hapless

 Elizabeth.

Elizabeth. It was too much for her weak frame to support; she could only place her child in safety by her side, ere she sunk back senseless. But she surmised not the tale of horror which her sister had to unfold.

We have before hinted that Aukland was pursuing a life of infamy and ruin. The willing slave to the sensibilities of his nature, his passions soon gained the control over his reason; his temper became highly irritable—at times gloomy. In these moments he fled from the bottle to the gaming-table; the one ruined his health, the other his fortune; the reflections of the morning were chased by the smiles of the beauteous Frances, whose unconstrained love left her a willing victim to the passion of her seducer. From day to day he deferred making his intention of marrying her known to her family, for each morning did he hope his evening's fortune would brighten his views.

Alas!

Alas! fortune or villany rendered his hopes abortive; he had not another stake left; his commission, the whole of his worldly property, was now risked — his doom was fixed—he flew to his room—he penned a few hasty lines to Frances—told her of his maddening propensity—thanked Heaven her fortune was yet left—placed a brace of pistols to his mouth—and was gone.

I have thus condensed this narrative, for it is a common tale. I pass over the despair of Frances at receiving the intelligence—it may be conceived. Nature, in moulding her heart, had rendered it susceptible; but the more acute, the more powerful feelings of human nature she knew not; she could not comprehend them—a sort of morbid insensibility seemed to benumb her faculties, which she had just recovered when she sought her sister.

The character of Elizabeth has indeed been but little understood, if the reader can for one moment conceive that reproaches, or sarcasms, or coldness, could evince her sense of her sister's degradation; she took the poor sufferer to her bosom—she felt her dereliction from virtue; but the dreadful catastrophe which had just occurred, by awakening in her heart the fear of shame, spoke also—loudly spoke of guilt; and Elizabeth read in the eye, which once, with lovely confidence, met hers, now bending beneath the glance so often courted, the drooping form, the heavy head, and abstracted air, the sense she entertained of her fault; and her active mind had already arranged a plan to secure her from the shame which was so dreadful to a young and unhardened heart.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.



Ay, ay; and she hath offered to the doom
(Which unreversed stands in effectual force)
A sea of melting pearl, which some call tears.

SHAKESPEARE.



For there are sorrows
Where, of necessity, the soul must be
Its own support. WALLENSTEIN.

Petitions.

BEHOLD then the two hapless sisters on their road to London—behold them at the door of the prison; they arrive at No. 5, the room occupied by Mr. Beverly—Elizabeth clinging to the door-post for support; and her husband's countenance, as he raised it from the paper on which he was writing, expressing

astonishment, but no mark of pleasure; and as he advanced to take her hand, coldly said, he did not know her. Her frame, indeed, weakened by illness, and altered by the internal struggles of a mind vainly endeavouring to assimilate itself to circumstances, bore but faintly the appearance of that vivacious bloom which was so beautiful when she met the major at the altar.

From a conversation which succeeded the repose and refreshment their journey demanded, she found he had now hopes to effect his emancipation shortly; and what course of life to engage in to enable him to support his wife in tolerable comfort, was his consideration; and much did Elizabeth lament that at her request he had, when they married, thrown up the commission he held in the county militia.

Before night, a lodging was taken for

Frances,

Frances, by the name of Aukland; and the habit she wore confirmed what they wished should gain credence—that she was a widow. It was neat and convenient, containing two sleeping and a sitting-room, with the use of a kitchen. Elizabeth shared the bed of her sister, and her little Frances Matilda reposed in the bosom of the valued Bertram, who had proffered her attendance on the lovely sisters.

A fortnight passed away, and Frances became the mother of a beautiful boy. Bertram and Elizabeth shared the fatigue of attending her. It was settled, that as soon as Frances was sufficiently recovered, they should change their lodgings, Frances resume her name, and the little Henry be consigned to the care of Elizabeth. Her seclusion from her friends during the last few months rendered this plan apparently easy; and as her son, he would spare his mother the

the shame his birth must otherwise subject her to.

Beverly's creditor now seemed much inclined to compromise the matter, and he was persuaded that the eloquent distress of his wife would effect much for him. He requested that, in seeking an interview, she would make the attempt.

Never had her duty met so severe a trial. He was one of those who had forced so unwarrantably into her bedroom on the morning of her husband's arrest; but then the reasons Mr. Beverly urged for the necessity of this step—the low state of their finances—the welfare of her child—the freedom of her husband—all occurred—"Yes, I will go—this is but another to the many sacrifices I have already made. My pride requires these humiliations." And the sigh which concluded these reflections was stifled in the embraces of her child.

Mr.

Mr. Jabez Fletcher was a plain, unlettered tradesman. Unacquainted with the elegances, and unaccustomed to the indulgences of life, he scarcely comprehended that any thing but wealth could create distinctions in society. Of the feelings which aggravated to his distressed wife the confinement of her husband, he had no conception—she did not share the inconveniences of a prison, and therefore he deemed their pressure could not affect her. He had lately, from the villany of his connexions, lost considerable sums of money—this circumstance had engendered a suspicion foreign to his character. He would have avoided meeting her; but not being aware of her intention, she was in his presence ere her name announced her.

In trembling accents she disclosed the purport of her visit—she paused—a tear, which could not be controlled, choked her utterance. Again she proceeded to paint

paint her situation—the helplessness of her child.

A drop of sympathy, which glistened in the eye of her auditor, raised her hopes; but he was invulnerable. Mr. Beverly's conduct merited punishment —he was advised to persevere in his suit —in fact, it was in the hands of his attorney—he must act—he was sorry to refuse Mrs. Beverly—every one spoke well of her. He was sorry for the means resorted to when the arrest was made—he had no idea of finding them yet in repose. When he understood they were not risen, he entreated the bailiff to withdraw his writ, but in vain.

Elizabeth, from the calm determination of his manner, found there were no hopes left, and despondingly withdrew.

But in a few days the man of law

himself

himself seemed disposed to settle the affair, and Elizabeth must again become an agent for the benefit of her husband. A place of about four hundred a-year was become vacant. On account of some particular arrangements, it would not be filled up immediately; and Mr. Beverly fancied her old friend, Frederick Darnley, might procure it for him. Elizabeth therefore wrote to Matilda, to request that, through her, their wishes might be communicated to her brother; and her sister being quite recovered, she now again sought to change their abode.

They succeeded to their wishes; and Miss Frances Beverly, with Bertram and the two children, were already arrived at their new abode.

Elizabeth, who spent the greater part of every day with her husband, was now there; and it was settled, that on her return she should call and take some little articles

articles of comfort, which had been added to their furnished lodgings, on her return.

On alighting from her hired vehicle, she observed a gentleman in the room they had just vacated, and was moving towards the part of the house inhabited by her hostess, when a voice arrested her attention—she turned—it was Frederick Darnley.

He advanced towards her with the elegance, mixed with timidness, which was so natural to him, and begged to have the pleasure of accompanying her home. She acknowledged his attention, and he led her to the vehicle.

Their ride was not long, and they entered the room just as Frances had received a letter from Bertram. The unexpected appearance of one who had known her under different and fairer

prospects,

prospects, gave to her cheek the roses her late confinement had chased.

Frederick was an enthusiastic admirer of beauty. He had, when he last saw Frances as a child, admired the beautiful regularity of her features, and now, as he clasped both her hands, and raised them to his lips, burst into a passionate exclamation on their beauty; but observing her confusion, checked himself, apologized, as far as glances could entreat forgiveness, for his presumption; and seating himself between the sisters, addressed to Elizabeth a conversation referring to the request his sister Matilda had conveyed to him, with a gentle reproof that she had not allowed him the pleasure of personally receiving her commands.

Elizabeth expressed her sense of his kindness, as she inquired if there were

any

any hopes of obtaining the place in question?

Her friend lamented that he had not a personal acquaintance with the nobleman who had the disposal of it; but that he would seek a gentleman, connected by family ties, with whom he was intimate, and would do himself the pleasure of communicating the result on the following morning.

He was punctual to his appointment; and after the usual compliments had passed, he turned to Elizabeth, and said —"I have placed your cause in a situation where it cannot fail of commanding success. Captain Prince is, I believe, well known to you. By the sudden death of a second cousin, who fell in a duel, he is now the presumptive heir to the title and estates of lord Chester, who has declared his intention never to marry."

A bitter

A bitter pang came across the bosom of Elizabeth—she could not forget her rejection of the hand of captain Prince; and independent of this, he appeared to have too little delicacy of mind to render an obligation from him pleasant; but she had gone too far to recede; and, ever the victim of feeling, she now doubted if her present reflections were not criminal.

Recollecting that Bertram must be fatigued with both the children, she was going to relieve her, when she entered the room, with the little Henry in her arms. She would willingly have spared Frances the pang she was convinced she must at this moment feel; but it was too late; she therefore coolly took the infant, and seating herself again on the sofa, forced herself to join in the conversation.

Frederick admired and caressed the child,

child, and Frances recovered her confusion.

Frederick, in rising to go, said that captain Prince much wished to have accompanied him this morning in his visit, but that he waited her permission to pay his respects to her; if Elizabeth would accord it, he would name the following morning for his visit.

Elizabeth could not but accede to his request, and she sent to apprise her husband of her success.

Captain Prince preceded Frederick at the appointed time, and Elizabeth was delighted to perceive that his manners retained none of that freedom which had so obtruded itself on her recollection. He was gentlemanly and respectful.

Sorrow and tears had taken from Elizabeth

zabeth that freshness of beauty—the emanation of a mind unsubdued by care; but she yet retained that expression of countenance which is the image of a sensible heart. In the evening, when the rosebud is drooping from the effects of a meridian sun, we can fancy what was its attraction in the morning, and anticipate its renewed loveliness when, carefully watered, it may recover its sweets, and expand its leaves to fresh maturity.

Captain Prince had, in fact, merited the character which had prejudiced the mind of Elizabeth in his disfavour. His profession encourages a laxity of morals, with regard to females, not to be known in any other; and he had persuaded himself no principle need be applied to his conduct, but such as his own caprice dictated. Miss Bendish had become the object of his avowed ridicule, and his vivacity had impelled him to a scheme, which nothing could justify, of drawing her

her into a marriage with his clerk, when Elizabeth's appearance attracted him from it. The false flow of spirits she had assumed for the ball gave her, in his eyes, additional charms; but notwithstanding the liveliness of manner, almost tinctured with levity, which she displayed, there was about her enough of the dignity of virtue to awe a libertine; and once or twice on this evening, its exertion prevented the freedom of manner and familiarity of address he generally assumed.

He had feeling enough to understand her sensibility, and sense enough to estimate her genius, but he did not wish to marry, and had determined to conquer a passion so hastily formed, when he met her alone in the lane. He must join her to inquire how she bore the fatigue of the preceding evening—his admiration was again elicited, and every prudent resolution forgotten.

He

He was soon after ordered away, and hopeless of success, had ceased to love her, but had never, when accident brought her to remembrance, ceased to admire her. The "Pleasures of Hope" became his favourite poem; and in vain he endeavoured to detach the images it presented to his mind from her idea.

He was a man of information. A good deal of time, when on board, was devoted to literary pursuits, and when on shore, his attention was directed to those attainments which blend the gentleman with the scholar. When his uncle announced his intention of making him his heir, he threw up his command; and in the delightful bustle of congratulations, and the enjoyments of independence, the last lingering remembrance of our heroine had faded away, and the pleasures of sense were courted, to the entire exclusion of the enjoyments of the mind, partaken even to satiety.

 Languid,

Languid, listless, and uneasy, he had become the modern man of fashion. Too indolent to become a leader, he partook of every vice, without a taste for any.

Thus was he situated, when Frederick applied to him to secure the situation Mr. Beverly was desirous of filling. To give weight to his application, he presented him the letter Elizabeth had written to Miss Darnley. Its style, its sentiments, brought the being who had touched his heart to his recollection; but it could not be her—she was unmarried. His friend cleared up the seeming mystery; and he desired an introduction with an earnestness which astonished Frederick, who, with quickness, inquired if he had ever seen her sister?

He replied in the negative.

"Then if you seek an introduction, I would guard you against her beauty."

"To mere beauty, my friend, I am invulnerable—it is the soul-beaming expression

pression which varies the rose on the cheek—the eye flashing with sentiment and genius, which, possesses the charm for me."

Frederick was satisfied, for of Elizabeth's virtue he had no doubts.

CHAPTER XII.

Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it.

SHAKSPEARE.

. . . .

Ah! why delay, my pretty love?
The sun is sinking in the ocean,
The clear green waters slowly move,
The weary zephyrs scarce have motion:
Soon, soon the gloomy shades of night
Will want those eyes of starry light.

Oberon's Invitation to Titania.

An Elopement.

THE major was liberated; and animated by the promise which he had gained from captain Prince, that if this place was engaged, another should be sought for

for him, now wished Elizabeth to enter a little into the amusements of the metropolis; but to this she steadily objected; public places now afforded no amusement for her.

Frances occasionally accompanied Frederick for a ride in the Park in his curricle, and her health and spirits seemed benefited by the exercise. In fact, their mornings were generally engrossed by Darnley and his friend; Elizabeth was dissatisfied with this disposal of her time.

Captain Prince professed himself her sincere and devoted friend; his library was ransacked for works suited to her taste; the finest fruits of his hot-house graced her table; and every delicacy which his uncle's manor could afford was at her disposal. His manner was usually consistent with the professions he made; but at times, a look, an action, would fill her with alarms; but then

again she would hate herself for the suspicions she cherished; besides, her beauty was all faded, and her manner so matronly, it would not excite an unchaste idea. She was mistaken. It was the delicate modesty her person and manner exhibited which touched the imagination of the libertine—it was the contrast she exhibited to his late associates which first awakened his passion; had she come forward even as he had before known her, she had not been so dangerous as at this moment, when he dared not breathe his passion lest he should be banished her presence for ever. He dared not even attempt to undermine that virtue he sought to overthrow, lest she should detect the hypocrite and detest him; he also feared (so inconsistent is vice) that with the virtue which had so charmed him, his passion would fall, and the most dreadful ideas followed this conjecture. He knew Beverly's embarrassments—he had discovered him to be selfish and unfeeling

feeling—he fancied him to be imbecile—he was acquainted with Beverly's unfortunate predilection for gaming—he drew him into play, and, at a favourable opportunity, avowed his passion for his wife. The declaration aroused all that was manly in his nature; he treated his perfidious friend with the contempt he deserved; but when he coolly reminded him of the debt he had incurred, of his future prospects all depending on him —when he bid him again open his arms to receive his lovely, ill-treated wife in a jail, his anguish overcame him; he was for some moments incapable of thought or reflection. "Hear me!" he cried. "Beverly, you depend on your wife's honour; leave her to take care of it. An appointment in India waits your acceptance; take it, and embark without seeing your wife; give me a letter that you appoint me her guardian in your absence, and she shall fill her established

 rank

rank in society; she shall be shielded from poverty and censure."

He asked a week for consideration; in the mean time, the unsuspicious victim of their machinations was securing a little fund for future exigencies. She perceived their means, which were very limited, daily melting away, and applied to a house to be employed in ornamental paper works. She now cherished in her bosom a melancholy which threatened to become habitual; and strange to say, in this new trait captain Prince found a reason for hope; in the reserve of her manner he read the fears of a virtuous mind, lest it should become the slave of a willing passion; and in her melancholy, the regret that she had not accepted the offer of his hand: when he contrasted himself with her husband, he could not fear his success—it was only when he contemplated the noble mind, the

the animated virtue, and enthusiasm of duty—when he saw her absorbed in her maternal cares, that he almost despaired.

A new source of concern and embarrassment now obtruded itself on Elizabeth. The attentions of Frederick Darnley towards her sister became so marked, that they could not be misunderstood; she wished to warn him of his danger; he could not, he must not, wed her sister, guilty as she was; and yet how could she inform him of the circumstances which must bar a union with him? At length she summoned resolution to address her sister on the subject; the hour when the curricle of Mr. Darnley stopped at the door was past, and he had not arrived. The restlessness of manner evinced by Frances was so marked, that Elizabeth gladly seized it to introduce the subject. She arose, and took her hand —"My dearest Frances, notwithstanding the very little difference in our age,

circumstances have occurred which have given me an unusual influence in your heart—to the affection of a sister, it has added a feeling of interest almost maternal. In giving you pain, therefore, you must imagine the violence I do to my own feelings; but you are again in a situation of danger—Frederick Darnley—ah! you surmise what I am going to say—spare his heart the pangs you are preparing for it by this encouragement of his attentions; you cannot be his wife."

Frances burst into tears; not a sentence could the expostulations of her sister draw from her—her manner was not that of sullenness, but grief, sorrow, remorse.

The next morning she went her accustomed ride; sat down to table with the family, and was no more visible; her child was her companion. A short note informed Elizabeth, "that she had bade

bade her adieu for ever—that the virtue, the fortitude she displayed, so much aggravated the crimes of which she had been guilty, that her presence was a constant source of reproach to her—that she loved and honoured her more than any one in the world—but that they must never meet again." The note contained a bank-bill to some amount.

"Oh God!" cried Elizabeth, as the scrawl fell from her trembling hand, "to what new sorrows am I to be exposed! So various and so strange are the trials to which thou seest fit to subject me, that I must lose that confidence in thy providence which has hitherto solaced me, and give myself up to the despair these aggravated griefs will surely excuse."

The step which Frances had taken was so utterly unlike the general tenor of her conduct—timid, even to childish-

ness, that she could in no way account for the feeling which prompted her to it; and when she contemplated the meek innocence of her character, the softness of her disposition, and the extreme beauty of her person, she trembled for her safety.

When Frederick Darnley received his sister's letter, recommending the cause of Elizabeth to his consideration, he execrated his country connexions as a great bore, and was devising some excuse to rid himself of the business, when a hackney-coach passed the window of the coffee-room where he was standing; and some bustle having occurred, it was detained for a few minutes. The windows were let down by its occupiers, to ascertain what occasioned the detention, and a gentleman, who was standing by him, directed his attention towards it, by exclaiming—"By Heavens, Darnley! 'tis a divinity!" On following the direction

direction of his friend's glance, Frederick recognized a face he was convinced he had once known; and the subject he had been considering immediately recalling the Beverly family to his remembrance, he had no difficulty in fixing the resemblance there. All desire of evading further solicitation on the part of Mrs. Beverly now subsided; but as his memory could not identify to which branch of the family this beautiful face appertained, on finding Mrs. Beverly had quitted the lodgings to which he was directed, he was questioning the landlady to ascertain if Mrs. Beverly had any companion? The name of Aukland, connected with the Darnleys and widowhood, seemed mysterious; he had no time to pursue his inquiries, for Elizabeth arrived. Their ride was not long. In *Miss Beverly* he discovered the supposed widow. Her agitation, when the child was introduced, confirmed every suspicion.

Frederick was not a libertine, for he started with horror from the seduction of innocence. But he had lived long in the world; he had fluttered about a court—he had learned to lessen the horror of guilt by a palliative term. He had given in his manner a countenance to vices, from which he flattered himself his soul shrunk; but in making his estimate of moral evil, he considered it with reference to the community, not to the individual, and in himself he valued the virtues of the patriot, not of the man. The fine talents of some of his associates had given a fictitious lustre to their private characters, which were degraded by sensual indulgences and luxurious habits. In neglecting to analyse the qualities which elicited his admiration, he lessened his quick sense of immorality. The beauty of Frances had captivated his senses—her innocent loveliness had seduced his affections—had he believed her virtuous, he had

yet

yet principle enough to fly from the temptation; but he deemed her deceptive—he knew her to be imprudent, and he was unacquainted with any palliative causes to be advanced in her favour; he therefore considered her a lawful prize. Deeply skilled in the science of the human heart, it is no wonder he soon effaced the remembrance of Aukland from that of Frances—susceptible, even to a fault. The simplicity of her looks, the propriety of her manners, and the internal evidence he gained of the delicacy of her feelings, which her error had not been able to eradicate, would, in an earlier stage of their acquaintance, have proved her safeguard; but his heart had become interested in the pursuit, and in her beautiful eyes he read a reciprocal feeling—he could not retract—he lulled her conscience by that sort of conversation men know so well how to adapt to an unreflecting, inexperienced girl; and as her innocence was lost, her principles

principles became subverted. Rousseau, Mary Wolstonecroft, with his own illustrations, were his vehicles for yet more dangerous doctrines. Yet in the sedate resignation of Elizabeth, his triumph received a check; her heart felt a pang, and she willingly listened to his wishes, that they might escape their influence.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

I love thee; I dote on thy face so divine;
I must and will have thee, and force makes thee mine.

The Erl King.

. . . .

By those that deepest feel are ill exprest
The indistinctness of the suffering breast,
Where thousand thoughts begin to end in one,
Which seeks from all the refuge found in none.

The Corsair.

Passion.

THE week allowed to Beverly for deliberation was past; the man who *could* deliberate on such a subject was capable of only one line of conduct; he persuaded himself that his wife's virtue would rise more resplendently bright from the trial; that it was only this consideration

sideration that could induce him to submit to the exposure; he forgot that when a man forfeits his wife's esteem, he loses the greatest safeguard to her honour.

Elizabeth was surprised at an observation from her husband, that their present lodgings were too expensive, accompanied by a proposal that they should remove into others which he had looked over in the morning.

This proposition was of course assented to by Elizabeth; and she soon found herself in rooms more neatly and comfortably fitted up, which her husband assured her were taken at about two-thirds the expence the last were held at.

She found her landlady a polished, indeed almost an elegant woman, about forty; she was the widow of a lieutenant of the navy. She soon became much attached

attached to our heroine; and having, a few years since, lost a child the age of the little Frances, imbibed a fondness for her scarcely inferior to the maternal.

In the sitting-room appropriated to our heroine were some book-shelves, neatly and tastefully fitted up, containing some elegantly-bound books; they were principally of the lighter kind; many of the German plays then so much in vogue, some French novels, and some of our modern British poets.

Though Elizabeth's mind, from recent afflictive circumstances, was just now too reflective to dwell on this sort of reading with much pleasure, yet the appearance of the books gave to her little room an appearance of comfort, a semblance of home, which conveyed a pleasurable sensation to her bosom, if pleasure is not too strong a term to apply to that heart, whose every hope in the

spring

spring of life is chilled by disappointment.

She was scarcely settled in her new abode, when captain Prince called one morning, and, with particular intelligence in his look and manner, deprecated her grief, as he acknowledged himself the bearer of intelligence which he feared would prove afflictive.

Elizabeth, whose mind was filled with the recent elopement of her sister, begged to know what he had to communicate?

Her anxiety had robbed her cheek of the faint bloom which still retained its station there, and the tears started into her eyes as she waited his elucidation.

He began by asking—"Have you seen Mr. Beverly since breakfast?"

"No; he left me early this morning."

"That

"That he left you no adieu, I am well informed; and I am now led to surmise that you are also ignorant of his recent appointment in India."

"Appointment in India! is it possible?"

"Indeed it is; I was fortunate enough to procure it for him, and am happy to say he estimates my friendship as it deserves, for to me he has entrusted a treasure which kings could not purchase—he has deputed me the guardian, the protector of his—child;" for in the cold surprise Elizabeth's manner expressed, he read the disapprobation with which any more pointed allusion would be received.

"My child! Had he then so little confidence in my affection, my cares, that it was necessary to nominate another guardian?"

"He estimates you as all must who know you; but there are circumstances, there are cases, in which a woman can-

not

not command the means of deciding—be it my care to assist in them."

He paused; but he saw in Elizabeth no smile of approval, no mark of approbation; her heart was encircled by dismay; no blush, no tear, marked her sense of the new insult she had received from her husband, but in her sleepless nights, her restless, anxious days, soon gave evidence of her deep feeling on the occasion..

The most delicate assiduities, the most soothing attentions, were lavished on her by captain Prince, the most friendly cares proffered by Mrs. Seymour, her landlady; but nothing could sooth the anxiety of our heroine. At length she acquainted her new friend, that she purposed, with her child, seeking some retired spot in the country, where they might find shelter and comfort; and that on the sale of a few ornaments, and

the labour of her hands, she must depend for subsistence till she could receive remittances from her husband.

Mrs. Seymour saw no necessity for such a sacrifice; she had understood Mr. Beverly's appointment was lucrative, and his friend would certainly advance any sum necessary for her present purpose.

She then launched forth in the praises of captain Prince's generosity and worth; but Elizabeth's resolution was not to be shaken; she could not submit to a voluntary dependence; and from her own exertions she hoped a relief to her oppression of spirits; she therefore declared her resolution of leaving her present residence at the expiration of the time for which they had taken the lodgings; and to forward her plans, sent her faithful Bertram down to Bath, to seek, in its neighbourhood, some abode suited to her humble circumstances.

She

She now found some leisure to ponder on the singular circumstance of her husband having left her without an adieu; and in her next interview with captain Prince, adverted to the circumstance, by inquiring if Mr. Beverly had left for her no message, no scrap of paper?

"None, madam, but what I have had the pleasure of communicating; to me, indeed, he spoke much of you; he lamented that an union with him should, on your account, ever have taken place. Oh, Elizabeth," he cried, falling at her feet, "do you wonder that I also join in his regrets? Are you still blinded to the passion which consumes me—which filled my bosom the first instant I saw you—that must live there till time itself be lost? Had I kingdoms, they should be offered with my hand; as it is, I can only proffer my fortune and my love. Nay, hear me," he continued; "look not so horror-struck; your husband has relinquished you, being well convinced

he

he cannot conduce to your happiness; accept then of my protection. Your child I must demand. Can you consent to desert it?"

Anguish, horror, and amazement, struggled in the bosom of Elizabeth for expression; the contest was so violent, that life itself seemed almost sacrificed; she sunk on the floor insensible. Long she continued so, and from her faintness recovered only to fall into a lethargic sleep, which continued for some hours; she awoke from it with a loud scream, and throwing back the curtains, demanded, in a frantic voice, her child.

Captain Prince, who was near the bed, advancing towards her, endeavoured to take her hand; he would have expressed his regrets at having wounded her feelings—he would have deprecated her resentment, have implored her pardon, but the wild, the vacant, the fixed

gaze which met his view, arrested his words, and they faltered on his lips.

"Oh give me my child!" she cried. "I will kneel to thee, and be thy servant, for a sight of its cold and mangled corse! 'Tis in vain you try to hide her from me; she loved me so much, that she will burst even the bonds of death to view me!"

Loud and reiterated shrieks now succeeded, and incoherent expressions, of the wildest and most dreadful import, almost reduced her persecutor to her own situation; he desired the nurse to take Frances to her. She gazed on the child vacantly, and seemed not to heed her, till, alarmed at her wandering and ghastly look, she turned affrighted from her, and hiding her face in the nurse's bosom, wept bitterly.

Elizabeth then looking earnestly on it,

it, seemed to dwell intently on some passing thought, for she said, quick and muttering—"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb!" and then added, "God gave me a blessing once; but I wept over it, and cherished it; and now I am quite—quite deserted!"

The expression of her countenance had now changed from wild insanity to fixed despair; silent, and pale as a statue, she sat apparently lost in grief. Questions, commands, entreaties, and expostulations, were alike unheeded.

The physicians who attended her pronounced her in imminent danger; but having, with some difficulty, administered a composing draught, declared the event would be soon decided.

To endeavour to analyse the feelings of captain Prince, would be a difficult and an unprofitable task; he would have

sacrificed his fortune, even his life, to have restored her to reason; and many were the vows he offered to fulfil on her recovery; but when he saw her again rising from the bed of sickness—saw the proud resignation of her manner, her dignified look and commanding air, his former views, hopes, and wishes returned.

She now insisted on having her little Matilda (for so she now always called her child) constantly with her, and would scarcely trust it a moment from her arms. This exertion, so trying to a frame weakened as hers was by illness and mental struggles, so much retarded her recovery, that her medical attendants declared they thought her constitution would not sustain the shock, if some plan was not devised to prevail on her to relinquish an effort so inconsistent with her strength.

Captain

Captain Prince, who dared not yet obtrude himself upon her, was not sorry for the opportunity now offered of claiming her attention; he therefore, in a short note, expressed his wish to be allowed a few minutes conversation with her, in order to relieve her mind from the dread which seemed to oppress it for the fate of her child. He was immediately admitted; and advancing towards the sofa, where Elizabeth was seated, expressed his pleasure at finding her so much recovered, and would have taken her hand; but she used it to press the child closer to her bosom, and she wrapped her veil round it, as if to shield her from the touch which she feared might annihilate it; and the cold shudder of her averted look spoke, in the most expressive manner, her abhorrence of captain Prince.

He was not prepared for this; he expected vehement reproach; and from it

he hoped to have extracted some sentiment resembling gratitude, upon giving up every claim upon the infant of Elizabeth.

Some moments were passed in silence; at length, turning towards captain Prince, Elizabeth said—"I had determined, sir, on never again viewing a man who could pervert the name and purposes of friendship as you have done; but the claim you think proper to assert over the destiny of my child has changed my determination. Let me now hear what are your views, what your intentions; do not fear my supplications shall be exerted to induce you to change your purpose; for I feel my health is in such a state, that the fulfilment of your threat will leave me nothing to wish, to hope, or to fear, in this world."

She paused; and from her silence only did captain Prince imagine she expected

an

an answer; for her looks, in the most profound melancholy, were again directed to her child—"I came, madam, with an intention of giving up every claim that could give you uneasiness; I came determined to cancel, in your presence, the deed which constituted me the guardian of major Beverly's child; but this settled aversion, from leaving me no hope that any step can gain me your regard, has unsettled my purpose. But if you will only promise to see me sometimes, to let me endeavour, by the correctness of my future conduct, to prove myself your friend; say but you will do this, and any time you may demand for the restoration of your health, any retreat you may prefer for that purpose, shall be yours; and my presence shall not be obtruded upon you till the expiration of the term which you shall appoint."

We will not follow the captain through

the arguments he used, nor trace Elizabeth's feelings as she deadened every hope vanity or passion could raise in his bosom. Ere they parted, she found her situation even worse than she had surmised. In Mrs. Seymour she found a creature of captain Prince; and in the debt she had unavoidably contracted, she found a plea was raised for her detention.

As she hoped the sale of her watch and ornaments would produce sufficient for the discharge of this, she wrote her faithful Bertram, to desire she would dispose of them, and forward to her the amount; at the same time informing her, that her long and expensive illness would, she feared, render it impossible for her to adopt the plan of retirement and comfort she once hoped to possess; but that immediately on the receipt of the money she had written for, she should again take possession of the apartment her mother

had

had before appropriated to her, till she had adopted some plan for her future subsistence.

Day after day elapsed, and no answer arriving, Elizabeth became a prey to the most dreadful anxiety; her health visibly sunk beneath the conflict; another and another letter was written; and the idea, that either the one she had sent, or the one she expected to arrive, had been detained, took possession of her mind. On the seventh day after the date of the letter she had first written, in taking the child from the servant (whom alone she would now suffer to relieve her in the fatigue attendant on it), she found a letter slipped into her hand, and was inexpressibly surprised, on going into her chamber, to read as follows:—

———

"A long period has elapsed since your name has passed my lips—the same time has found me endeavouring to banish from my heart that image which animated every pulsation; in the struggle I have never inquired if I had been successful, till I heard that you were unfortunate, when I felt that all you could wish extirpated was lost; and only the most lively esteem, the most profound respect, and the sincerest friendship, remained; these sentiments have led me to be minute in my inquiries respecting you; I traced you to your present residence—I presented myself at your door to desire admittance, but was always told you saw no company. Subsequent circumstances have led me to suppose that you were ignorant of my visits; I therefore take this opportunity of entreating you to consider me as your friend, and that you will have my agency in any way that may be most useful to you. If your present situation is

compulsatory,

compulsatory, suffer me to apprise some of your friends of it; if pecuniary embarrassments have any thing to do with it, consider that the kind of assistance which can extricate you from them is the least proof you can give a young man, without connexions or claims on his purse, of your esteem.

"That I am not more energetic in my language, more warm in my offers, you must attribute to the very delicate situation in which I find myself placed, and not to any want of the sentiments which must make any way you can render him useful, an office of pleasure to your very sincere and obedient humble servant,

"EDMUND DERMONT."

In her answer to this letter, which was conveyed through the servant the next time the child was taken to walk, Elizabeth, after expressing the feelings

of gratitude such unexpected proofs of friendship were calculated to excite, availed herself of his attentions, only to request he would deposit, in the post-office, a letter to her faithful Bertram, and to receive and convey her the answer to it through the same channel.

Awakened to the characters of her hostess and captain Prince, the watchfulness with which she regarded them now led her to conceive they had some grand plan in agitation; her surprise may therefore be imagined, when this *friend* of her husband gave her to understand that he was at length determined to relinquish a pursuit, from which he could hope to derive no advantage; and added with significance, that Mrs. Seymour had promised to place no farther barrier in the way of her removal, if she would consign to her the valuables she had in her possession.

Joyfully

Joyfully did Elizabeth assent to these terms; and taking her treacherous landlady to her own room, delivered to her every article of her wearing apparel, excepting only the clothes she must necessarily wear in her journey down to Bath, where she thought she had reserved money enough, from her employment at her needle, to carry her.

So anxious was she to complete this purpose, that she declined waiting even for the letters she expected to receive from Mr. Dermont; and in taking leave of Mrs. Seymour for the night, begged to mention the following morning for the commencement of her journey.

Yet the uncertainty of her future prospects, the conduct of her husband, and a thousand other ideas, which only the unhappy can imagine, for only the unhappy can feel, obtruded themselves on her imagination, and chased sleep, till

till towards morning, when she fell into a heavy and unrefreshing slumber, from which she did not awake till rather a late hour. Having taken some refreshment, she searched in her desk for the small case where she kept her notes—it was not to be found. In vain she looked every where to which she had access—it was gone, irrecoverably gone; and seven shillings in her purse was all the worldly property at her command.

For a moment she hesitated whether to apply to captain Prince for a supply sufficient to carry her to Bath, where she yet believed the sale of a few valuables in her possession would still afford her a temporary means of subsistence; but the abhorrence she felt for him immediately damped this idea; and she had received too many mortifications from those she had already received from Mrs. Seymour, to condescend to accept from her any additional favours; she

therefore

therefore determined to perform the journey on foot. On such a public road, she thought it most probable some conveyance might offer, which could be obtained at an easy expence; for now out of the power of her persecutors, every impediment seemed trifling.

She forgot her own delicate health—the infant scarcely two years old, who demanded her assistance; and after throwing on her cloak and bonnet, she descended to Mrs. Seymour's room; and telling her she was come to deliver the keys of her apartments, and to bid her a final adieu, she courtesied, and would have withdrawn, when a shabby-looking man, who was waiting in the passage, arrested her attention, as he entreated she would not forget the shoeblack; and added, Susan having been sent out on an errand, had desired him to entreat the lady to remember her likewise.

These

These claims on her purse had always been generously remembered by Elizabeth. Her eyes were turned towards Mrs. Seymour, and she would have petitioned her assistance, but the malignant triumph she there witnessed decided her; and drawing out her purse, she gave it to the man, and desiring he would divide the contents with Susan, and to tell the latter she should remunerate her in a way better according with her wishes, when she arrived at Bath, again turned towards the door, as Mrs. Seymour seemed making an ineffectual motion to detain her, for her attention was totally engrossed by surprise at the sight which now met her view; and her surprise was changed to horror, as a gentleman called to the officers of justice, who entered with him, to seize that woman, who stood charged on oath with having detained a letter intended for one of her lodgers, inclosing a considerable sum of money.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth too paused, for in the person of the gentleman she discovered Mr. Dermont, who, approaching her with the most marked respect, begged to be allowed the pleasure of a few minutes conversation with her.

She led him to a small parlour; and he there entreated her pardon for the liberty he had taken in proceeding so far in an affair so material, without her sanction; but that, having no opportunity of forwarding a letter to her, and having learned from Susan that it was her intention to leave London that morning, he had ventured on the step she was so much surprised at; at the same time drawing a letter from his pocket, which, he said, was from Mrs. Bertram, and which she had directed for him, in the fear, however groundless, that her mistress's name might invite curiosity, even through that channel.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth was too much agitated to attend, at this moment, to the particulars Dermont would have advanced; and indeed the embarrassment he felt, when called upon to make the disclosure, rendered it so obscure, that we must leave his tale, and give the particulars in his own words.

CHAPTER XIV.



> Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
> For thee the tear be duly shed,
> Belov'd, till life shall charm no more,
> And mourn'd till pity's self be dead.
>
> *Dirge in Cymbeline.*

Friends shown in Acts of Friendship.

Mr. Dermont having, soon after the marriage of Elizabeth, lost his father, came into possession of a clear five hundred a-year. This property, though small, was amply sufficient for his ideas of comfort, even with a wife and family. Unallied, unconnected as he was, it seemed rather a curse than a blessing, for the house appertaining to the estate, by bringing to his remembrance the hours Elizabeth had passed in it, was blended

blended with too many ideas inimical to his peace to become his residence; and the farm which his father had himself occupied, and which might, by employing his time, have dissipated the melancholy which still preyed on his mind, not being necessary to his comfort, was let with the house, and he indulged himself in making the tour of his own country.

In passing through Bath, the crystal enclosing the hair in his brooch being loose, he stepped into a jeweller's, to get it fastened. As he was waiting, he observed, with some other articles, a chain and seals lying on the counter; and carelessly taking them up, he was struck with a device he well remembered to have seen on Elizabeth's notes. It was an extraordinary coincidence, as she had been a resident here. Could she be enough reduced to be under the necessity of disposing of these trifles?

As

As this question was painfully agitating his mind, he examined another—"Elizabeth" met his view on a scroll—it must be hers. He turned towards the jeweller, and requested to know if these were to be disposed of? and was answered in the affirmative.

After assuring Mr. Stock that his questions were not dictated by idle curiosity, he proceeded to inquire who had left them for sale? and was told that a plain-dressed woman had requested a given sum of money on them and a few other trinkets, as the lady to whom they belonged had immediate occasion for that sum—that she declined selling them altogether, but that the lady would return in a few days, and would then devise some means of repaying him.—Being engaged at the moment, Mr. Stock had requested that she would call again, that he might make some inquiries respecting her character, which he had found

found very respectable; and he had no doubt but the valuables in question had belonged to Mrs. Beverly, for it was her confidential servant, whom he now every minute expected, and who very soon after appeared.

Mr. Dermont having stepped on one side, as she conversed with the jeweller, heard the accents of her voice, in tones of disappointment, as Mr. Stock advised her to apply to a pawnbroker, it being quite out of his way to take valuables of this description.

She was turning to leave the shop, distress very legibly imprinted on her countenance, when Edmund, stepping forward, begged to be allowed to advance the required sum, at the same time demanding, in return, such particulars respecting the lady, for whom he was interested, as he wished to know.

Having

Having gathered the information he requested, he desired that her mistress might not, till her return, be informed that the money was obtained without the sale of the jewels, and immediately departed for London.

He waited not long before he presented himself at the door of Mrs. Seymour for admission; and inquiring for Mrs. Beverly, he was informed she was not at home. This surprised him, as he had, but a minute before, seen a gentleman enter, whom he supposed to be captain Prince; and these suspicions were confirmed by the groom, who was leading his horses in the street. He accordingly pursued the inquiry, if any one lodged there besides Mrs. Beverly? and was answered in the negative.

He returned disconsolate to his lodgings, and the following morning applied again, with no better success. He now inquired

inquired if the card he had left on the preceding day had been presented? The girl seemed embarrassed, but acknowledged that her mistress had desired that all cards and letters left for Mrs. Beverly should be carried to her, and that nobody should be admitted to her presence but captain Prince, who was a daily visitor.

Having doubled the bribe by which he had gained this intelligence, he begged that the girl would devise some plan whereby he might pursue his conversation; and she having told him at what hour she should be abroad with Mrs. Beverly's child, he waited her arrival; and the result of this conversation was the letter which has been laid before my readers.

Surmising, from the intelligence he had gathered from the girl, that Mrs. Beverly had been disappointed of some money

money she had expected to receive, he had no hesitation in believing that her letter to Mrs. Bertram was to inquire the reason; and on questioning the girl very closely, she confessed having taken a letter from the postman, for which she had paid double postage from Bath, and having delivered it to the hands of her mistress. He therefore took down her deposition immediately; and on her seeking him on the evening of the day preceding that fixed for Elizabeth's departure, he heard from her enough of a conversation which had passed between Mrs. Seymour and captain Prince, to inform him they meant to take every advantage of her necessities, to place her completely in their power, not deeming it possible that in her present weak state she could undertake such a journey; but even in the event of this they were not unprepared, for she would have been again intercepted, and lured back to them.

Just now Mrs. Bertram's letter was presented to him. As soon as he began it, he perceived who it was for, and also ascertained that his suspicions respecting it were well founded, as its date exactly tallied with that on which Susan had taken the letter to her mistress. He now hesitated not a moment; but taking the officers of justice, arrested Mrs. Seymour, as we have seen.

Ere Elizabeth had concluded her conference with Mr. Dermont, she received a message from Mrs. Seymour, entreating to see her. He immediately told Elizabeth that he had foreseen this, and adding, it was no doubt to endeavour to persuade her to avoid bringing the affair into a court of justice, which she would, of course, wish to avoid—"You are, my dear madam, so much agitated, that I must insist on your having some refreshment;" and ringing the bell, he sent Susan, who answered it, for a glass

of

of wine, while he entreated to be allowed to meet Mrs. Seymour, and act for her.

She gratefully accepted this proposal; and having consigned Elizabeth to the care of Susan, whom he desired not to leave her till his return, and having in a whisper warned Susan to apprise him if captain Prince should intrude, he departed to Mrs. Seymour.

On his return, which was not till some time had elapsed, he informed her that Mrs. Seymour, finding all prevarication useless, had gladly agreed to reimburse her for the money—"And," he added, bowing, "I took the liberty, finding from her conversation that she pretended to have some claims on you, to settle them all from the money she restored. The overplus," he added, "I have the pleasure of presenting to you;" and he placed something more than thirty gui-

neas in her hands, with Mrs. Seymour's bill, properly receipted—"I also desired that your bed might again be prepared, and that my servant should also have one made up within the sound of your bell; and that this good girl," he added, pointing to Susan, "should be constituted attendant on this sweet little creature, that you might have a night of uninterrupted repose, and that you might have no further occasion to see or converse with this disgrace to her sex. I have had all these items added to her bill."

The tears started into Elizabeth's eyes at these delicate attentions, but she did not attempt to utter a word—she looked her thanks.

He then, with distant respect, begged to be allowed to inquire after her health in the evening, took his leave, after signing to Susan to follow him from the

room,

room, when, giving her some directions conducive to the comfort of Elizabeth, he quitted her, and arrived at his lodging. He had not before dared to dwell on the altered look and manner of Elizabeth; it now struck to his heart, as the circumstance of their first meeting passed in review before him—intelligence, enthusiasm, genius, sensibility, and love, beaming in every glance, and animating every gesture; whilst the rose and the lily, which nature had so finely blended in her countenance, and which in turn predominated, as distinct emotions agitated her bosom, seemed almost useless to delineate the feeling they betrayed, as every line of her expressive countenance served as an index to her soul. Now sorrow had dismantled the cheek of its bloom, and care appeared to have chilled the enthusiasm which had so marked her character, the sensibility which formerly lived in her smiles and tears was now melted into a soft melan-

choly; and the love, which had so often called for a sympathetic feeling in the bosom of her companions, seemed lost in that maternal feeling which imparts to the heart so sweet a reality; in place of the dreams of youthful passion, her animation was absorbed in the mild resignation her countenance and voice exhibited.

He returned to Elizabeth in the evening, and had the pleasure of finding her calm and tranquil, though her pallid countenance and heavy eyes gave but too evident signs that her health was not yet re-established; an expression of pleasure passed over her countenance as he entered, while the child struggled to get from her to Dermont, who had quite engaged her affection in the walks she had taken with Susan.

The little girl banished the awkwardness they must mutually have felt at

this

this meeting; and after taking some tea with Elizabeth, Mr. Dermont departed, having promised to return in the morning, and arrange for her departure. She, however, refused the offer he had pressed upon her of allowing his servant to sleep with her, having retained Susan in her dressing-room to occupy a small bed placed there for the nurse. Sleep again fled her eyes; and on attempting to rise in the morning, she found her head grow giddy, and she was obliged again to return to her pillow.

Mr. Dermont, though concerned, was not surprised at this information, which was conveyed by Susan, whom he entreated to watch over the poor sufferer. On his return, in about two hours, he was surprised, on being shewn into the little sitting-room appropriated to Elizabeth, to meet Mr. Darnley, with whom he had a slight acquaintance. Beatrice soon after entered, and in answer-

swer to his anxious inquiries for the interesting invalid, she replied that she believed quiet, and the society of those she loved and esteemed, would soon restore her; "and, my dear sir," she continued, "while you go on to visit Matilda, I will, with your leave, watch by this dear friend."

Mr. Darnley took her hand, and his eyes spoke the pleasure his words did not attempt to give.—"Much as your sister loves and values you, my dear girl, I am sure this excuse for your declining the visit will afford her the most heartfelt satisfaction; and, added to the tale we have to convey of your friend's virtuous fortitude, must communicate a view of human nature, gratifying in the extreme; but Elizabeth will, I hope, see me before I go."

"She will receive you in a few minutes; she is but just dressed, and that effort has so much fluttered her, that she wishes a little repose ere she receives you.

you. To you, sir," she added, bowing to Mr. Dermont, "she begged me to add her excuses for not availing herself of your attention this evening; she flatters herself she shall be well enough to receive you in the morning."

It is time now to account for the unexpected arrival of Mr. and Miss Darnley, who having in vain requested to see Mrs. Beverly in Elmwell, had made her frequently the subject of their conversation and thoughts. Their anxiety was most painfully increased by the arrival of an anonymous letter, detailing, in pretty accurate terms, her situation with captain Prince—the danger to which her virtue and principles were exposed; and concluded with an earnest entreaty that Mr. Darnley would endeavour to preserve one he had so much loved and esteemed.

Though Mr. Darnley did not much approve

approve of the manner in which he had obtained this information, he felt too much interested in the subject to suffer it to be lost without farther inquiry; and the letter having referred to Mrs. Bertram, at Bath, whom it described as a faithful attendant, for further information, he immediately wrote to her for every information; his letter arrived just as she had received the one from her mistress respecting the loss of the money; and the questions in Mr. Darnley's letter respecting captain Prince having recalled several circumstances to her memory which set his conduct in a dubious light, she returned such an answer as awakened all his anxiety, and he immediately determined to take this opportunity of visiting Matilda, her friends having long requested that pleasure; and as London lay in their road, they could, without any appearance of attention, which might leave a painful obli-

gation

